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DANTE

AND

DE MONARCHIA.

DANTE.

An Essay.

BY

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To which is added

A TRANSLATION OF

DE MONARCHIA.

BY F. J. CHURCH.

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NOTICE.

THE following Essay first appeared in the "Christian Remembrancer" of January, 1850, and it was reprinted in a volume of "Essays and Reviews," published in 1854.

It was written before the appearance in Germany and England of the abundant recent literature on the subject. With the exception of a few trifling corrections, it is republished without change.

By the desire of Mr. Macmillan, a translation of the *De Monarchia* is subjoined. I am indebted for it to my son, Mr. F. J. Church, late Scholar of New College. It is made from the text of Witte's second edition of the *De Monarchia*, 1874. The *De Monarchia* has been more than once translated into Italian and German, in earlier or later times. But I do not know that any English translation has yet appeared. It is analysed in the fifteenth chapter of Mr. Bryce's "Holy Roman Empire."

Witte, with much probability, I think, places the

composition of the work in the first part of Dante's life, before his exile in 1301, while the pretensions and arguments of Boniface VIII. (1294-1303) were being discussed by Guelf and Ghibelline partisans, but before they were formally embodied in the famous Bull *Unam Sanctam*, 1302. The character of the composition, for the most part, formal, general, and scholastic, sanguine in tone and with little personal allusion, is in strong contrast with the passionate and despairing language of resentment and disappointment which marks his later writings. As an example of the political speculation of the time, it should be compared with the "*De Regimine Principum*," ascribed to Thomas Aquinas. The whole subject of the mediæval idea of the Empire is admirably discussed in Mr. Bryce's book referred to above.

R. W. C.

ST. PAUL'S,
November, 1878.

DANTE

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[JAN. 1850.]

THE *Divina Commedia* is one of the landmarks of history. More than a magnificent poem, more than the beginning of a language and the opening of a national literature, more than the inspirer of art, and the glory of a great people, it is one of those rare and solemn monuments of the mind's power, which measure and test what it can reach to, which rise up ineffaceably and for ever as time goes on,

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* *Dante's Divine Comedy, the Inferno; a literal Prose Translation, with the Text of the Original.* By J. A. CARLYLE, M.D., London: 1849. I have never quite forgiven myself for not having said more of the unpretending but honest and most useful volume which stood at the head of this essay when it first appeared as an article. It was placed there, according to what was then a custom of article writers, as a peg to hang remarks upon which might or might not be criticisms of the particular book so noticed. It did not offer itself specially to my use, and my attention was busy with my own work. But this was no excuse for availing myself of a good book, and not giving it the notice which it deserved. To an English student beginning Dante, and wishing to study him in a scholarly manner, it is really more useful than a verse translation can be; and I have always greatly regretted that the plan of translating the whole work was dropped for want of the appreciation which the first instalment ought to have had. (1878.)

marking out its advance by grander divisions than its centuries, and adopted as epochs by the consent of all who come after. It stands with the *Iliad* and Shakspere's Plays, with the writings of Aristotle and Plato, with the *Novum Organon* and the *Principia*, with Justinian's *Code*, with the Parthenon and S. Peter's. It is the first Christian poem; and it opens European literature, as the *Iliad* did that of Greece and Rome. And, like the *Iliad*, it has never become out of date; it accompanies in undiminished freshness the literature which it began.

We approach the history of such works, in which genius seems to have pushed its achievements to a new limit, with a kind of awe. The beginnings of all things, their bursting out from nothing, and gradual evolution into substance and shape, cast on the mind a solemn influence. They come too near the fount of being to be followed up without our feeling the shadows which surround it. We cannot but fear, cannot but feel ourselves cut off from this visible and familiar world —as we enter into the cloud. And as with the processes of nature, so it is with those offsprings of man's mind, by which he has added permanently one more great feature to the world, and created a new power which is to act on mankind to the end. The mystery of the inventive and creative faculty, the subtle and incalculable combinations by which it was led to its

work, and carried through it, are out of the reach of investigating thought. Often the idea recurs of the precariousness of the result; by how little the world might have lost one of its ornaments—by one sharp pang, or one chance meeting, or any other among the countless accidents among which man runs his course. And then the solemn recollection supervenes, that powers were formed, and life preserved, and circumstances arranged, and actions controlled, that thus it should be: and the work which man has brooded over, and at last created, is the foster-child too of that "Wisdom which reaches from end to end, strongly and sweetly disposing all things."

It does not abate these feelings, that we can follow in some cases and to a certain extent, the progress of a work. Indeed, the sight of the particular accidents among which it was developed—which belong perhaps to a heterogeneous and widely discordant order of things, which are out of proportion and out of harmony with it, which do not explain it, which have, as it may seem to us, no natural right to be connected with it, to bear on its character, or contribute to its accomplishment, to which we feel, as it were, ashamed to owe what we can least spare, yet on which its forming mind and purpose were dependent, and with which they had to conspire—affects the imagination even more than cases where we see nothing. We are

tempted less to musing and wonder by the *Iliad*, a work without a history, cut off from its past, the sole relic and vestige of its age, unexplained in its origin and perfection, than by the *Divina Commedia*, destined for the highest ends and most universal sympathy, yet the reflection of a personal history, and issuing seemingly from its chance incidents.

The *Divina Commedia* is singular among the great works with which it ranks, for its strong stamp of personal character and history. In general we associate little more than the name—not the life—of a great poet with his works; personal interest belongs more usually to greatness in its active than its creative forms. But the whole idea and purpose of the *Commedia*, as well as its filling up and colouring, are determined by Dante's peculiar history. The loftiest; perhaps, in its aim and flight of all poems, it is also the most individual; the writer's own life is chronicled in it, as well as the issues and upshot of all things. It is at once the mirror to all time of the sins and perfections of men, of the judgments and grace of God, and the record, often the only one, of the transient names, and local factions, and obscure ambitions, and forgotten crimes, of the poet's own day; and in that awful company to which he leads us, in the most unearthly of his scenes, we never lose sight of himself. And when this peculiarity sends us

to history, it seems as if the poem which was to hold such a place in Christian literature hung upon and grew out of chance events, rather than the deliberate design of its author. History indeed here, as generally, is but a feeble exponent of the course of growth in a great mind and great ideas. It shows us early a bent and purpose—the man conscious of power and intending to use it—and then the accidents among which he worked: but how that current of purpose threaded its way among them, how it was thrown back, deflected, deepened, by them, we cannot learn from history. It presents but a broken and mysterious picture. A boy of quick and enthusiastic temper grows up into youth in a dream of love. The lady of his mystic passion dies early. He dreams of her still, not as a wonder of earth, but as a Saint in Paradise, and relieves his heart in an autobiography, a strange and perplexing work of fiction—quaint and subtle enough for a metaphysical conceit; but, on the other hand, with far too much of genuine and deep feeling. It is a first essay; he closes it abruptly as if dissatisfied with his work, but with the resolution of raising at a future day a worthy monument to the memory of her whom he has lost. It is the promise and purpose of a great work. But a prosaic change seems to come over this half-ideal character. The lover becomes the student—the student of the 13th

century — struggling painfully against difficulties, eager and hot after knowledge, wasting eyesight and stinting sleep, subtle, inquisitive, active-minded and sanguine, but omnivorous, overflowing with dialectical forms, loose in premiss and ostentatiously rigid in syllogism, fettered by the refinements of half-awakened taste, and the mannerisms of the Provençals. Boethius and Cicero, and the mass of mixed learning within his reach, are accepted as the consolation of his human griefs: he is filled with the passion of universal knowledge, and the desire to communicate it. Philosophy has become the lady of his soul—to write allegorical poems in her honour, and to comment on them with all the apparatus of his learning in prose, his mode of celebrating her. Further, he marries; it is said, not happily. The antiquaries, too, have disturbed romance by discovering that Beatrice also was married some years before her death. He appears, as time goes on, as a burgher of Florence, the father of a family, a politician, an envoy, a magistrate, a partisan, taking his full share in the quarrels of the day. At length we see him, at once an exile, and the poet of the *Commedia*. Beatrice reappears — shadowy, melting at times into symbol and figure—but far too living and real, addressed with too intense and natural feeling, to be the mere personification of anything.

The lady of the philosophical Canzoni has vanished. The student's dream has been broken, as the boy's had been; and the earnestness of the man, enlightened by sorrow, overleaping the student's formalities and abstractions, reverted in sympathy to the earnestness of the boy, and brooded once more on that Saint in Paradise, whose presence and memory had once been so soothing, and who now seemed a real link between him and that stable country, "where the angels are in peace." Round her image, the reflection of purity, and truth, and forbearing love, was grouped that confused scene of trouble and effort, of failure and success, which the poet saw round him; round her image it arranged itself in awful order—and that image, not a metaphysical abstraction, but the living memory, freshened by sorrow, and seen through the softening and hallowing vista of years, of Beatrice Portinari—no figment of imagination, but God's creature and servant. A childish love, dissipated by study and business, and revived in memory by heavy sorrow—a boyish resolution, made in a moment of feeling, interrupted, though it would be hazardous to say in Dante's case, laid aside, for apparently more manly studies, gave the idea and suggested the form of the "Sacred poem of earth and heaven."

And the occasion of this startling unfolding of the

poetic gift, of this passage of a soft and dreamy boy, into the keenest, boldest, sternest of poets, the free and mighty leader of European song, was, what is not ordinarily held to be a source of poetical inspiration,—the political life. The boy had sensibility, high aspirations, and a versatile and passionate nature; the student added to this energy, various learning, gifts of language, and noble ideas on the capacities and ends of man. But it was the factions of Florence which made Dante a great poet. But for them, he might have been a modern critic and essayist born before his time, and have held a high place among the writers of fugitive verses; in Italy, a graceful but trifling and idle tribe, often casting a deep and beautiful thought into a mould of expressive diction, but oftener toying with a foolish and glittering conceit, and whose languid genius was exhausted by a sonnet. He might have thrown into the shade the Guidos and Cinos of his day, to be eclipsed by Petrarch. But he learned in the bitter feuds of Italy not to trifle; they opened to his view, and he had an eye to see, the true springs and abysses of this mortal life—motives and passions stronger than lovers' sentiments, evils beyond the consolations of Boethius and Cicero; and from that fiery trial which without searing his heart, annealed his strength and purpose, he drew that great gift and power, by which he stands pre-

eminent even among his high compeers, the gift of being real. And the idea of the *Commedia* took shape, and expanded into its endless forms of terror and beauty, not under the roof-tree of the literary citizen, but when the exile had been driven out to the highways of the world, to study nature on the sea or by the river or on the mountain track, and to study men in the courts of Verona and Ravenna, and in the schools of Bologna and Paris—perhaps of Oxford.

The connexion of these feuds with Dante's poem has given to the middle age history of Italy an interest of which it is not undeserving in itself, full as it is of curious exhibitions of character and contrivance, but to which politically it cannot lay claim, amid the social phenomena, so far grander in scale and purpose and more felicitous in issue, of the other western nations. It is remarkable for keeping up an antique phase, which, in spite of modern arrangements, it has not yet lost. It is a history of cities. In ancient history all that is most memorable and instructive gathers round cities; civilisation and empire were concentrated within walls; and it baffled the ancient mind to conceive how power should be possessed and wielded, by numbers larger than might be collected in a single market-place. The Roman Empire indeed aimed at being one in its administration and law; but it was not a nation, nor were its

provinces nations. Yet everywhere but in Italy, it prepared them for becoming nations. And while everywhere else parts were uniting and union was becoming organisation—and neither geographical remoteness, nor unwieldiness of numbers, nor local interests and differences, were untractable obstacles to that spirit of fusion which was at once the ambition of the few and the instinct of the many; and cities, even where most powerful, had become the centres of the attracting and joining forces, knots in the political network—while this was going on more or less happily throughout the rest of Europe, in Italy the ancient classic idea lingered in its simplicity, its narrowness and jealousy, wherever there was any political activity. The history of Southern Italy indeed is mainly a foreign one, the history of modern Rome merges in that of the Papacy; but Northern Italy has a history of its own, and that is a history of separate and independent cities—points of reciprocal and indestructible repulsion, and within, theatres of action where the blind tendencies and traditions of classes and parties weighed little on the freedom of individual character, and citizens could watch and measure and study one another with the minuteness of private life.

Two cities were the centres of ancient history in its most interesting time. And two cities of modern

Italy represent, with entirely undesigned but curiously exact coincidence, the parts of Athens and Rome. Venice, superficially so unlike, is yet in many of its accidental features, and still more in its spirit, the counterpart of Rome, in its obscure and mixed origin, in its steady growth, in its quick sense of order and early settlement of its polity, in its grand and serious public spirit, in its subordination of the individual to the family, and the family to the state, in its combination of remote dominion with the liberty of a solitary and sovereign city. And though the associations and the scale of the two were so different—though Rome had its hills and its legions, and Venice its lagunes and galleys—the long empire of Venice, the heir of Carthage and predecessor of England on the seas, the great aristocratic republic of 1000 years, is the only empire that has yet matched Rome in length and steadiness of tenure. Brennus and Hannibal were not resisted with greater constancy than Doria and Louis XII.; and that great aristocracy, long so proud, so high-spirited, so intelligent, so practical, who combined the enterprise and wealth of merchants, the self-devotion of soldiers and gravity of senators, with the uniformity and obedience of a religious order, may compare without shame its Giustiniani, and Zenos, and Morosini, with Roman Fabii and Claudii. And Rome could not be more contrasted with Athens than

Venice with Italian and contemporary Florence—stability with fitfulness, independence impregnable and secure, with a short-lived and troubled liberty, empire meditated and achieved, with a course of barren intrigues and quarrels. Florence, gay, capricious, turbulent, the city of party, the head and busy patroness of democracy in the cities round her—Florence, where popular government was inaugurated with its utmost exclusiveness and most pompous ceremonial; waging her little summer wars against Ghibelline tyrants, revolted democracies, and her own exiles; and further, so rich in intellectual gifts, in variety of individual character, in poets, artists, wits, historians—Florence in its brilliant days recalled the image of ancient Athens, and did not depart from its prototype in the beauty of its natural site, in its noble public buildings, in the size and nature of its territory. And the course of its history is similar and the result of similar causes—a traditional spirit of freedom, with its accesses of fitful energy, its periods of grand display and moments of glorious achievement, but producing nothing politically great or durable, and sinking at length into a resigned servitude. It had its Peisistratidæ more successful than those of Athens; it had, too, its Harmodius and Aristogeiton; it had its great orator of liberty, as potent and as unfortunate as the antagonist of Philip. And finally, like Athens, it became content with the remembrance of its former

glory, with being the fashionable and acknowledged seat of refinement and taste, with being a favoured dependency on the modern heir of the Cæsars. But if to Venice belongs a grander public history, Florentine names and works, like Athenian, will be living among men, when the Brenta shall have been left unchecked to turn the Lagunes into ploughland, and when Rome herself may no longer be the seat of the Popes.

The year of Dante's birth was a memorable one in the annals of Florence, of Italy, and of Christendom.* The year 1265 was the year of that great victory of Benevento, where Charles of Anjou overthrew Manfred of Naples, and destroyed at one blow the power of the house of Swabia. From that time till the time of Charles V., the emperors had no footing in Italy. Further, that victory set up the French influence in Italy, which, transient in itself, produced such strange and momentous consequences, by the intimate connexion to which it led between the French kings and the Popes. The protection of France was dearly bought by the captivity of Avignon, the great western schism, and the consequent secularisation of the Papacy, which lasted on uninterrupted till the Council of Trent. Nearly three centuries of degradation and scandal, unrelieved by one heroic effort

* May, 1265. (Pelli.) Benevento: Feb. 26, 126⅝. The Florentine year began March 25.

among the successors of Gregory VII., connected the Reformation with the triumph of Charles and the Pope at Benevento. Finally, by it the Guelf party was restored for good in Florence; the Guelf democracy, which had been trampled down by the Uberti and Manfred's chivalry at Monteaperti, once more raised its head; and fortune, which had long wavered between the rival lilies, finally turned against the white one, till the name of Ghibelline became a proscribed one in Florence, as Jacobite was once in Scotland, or Papist in England, or Royalist in France.

The names of Guelf and Ghibelline were the inheritance of a contest which, in its original meaning, had been long over. The old struggle between the priesthood and the empire was still kept up traditionally, but its ideas and interests were changed: they were still great and important ones, but not those of Gregory VII. It had passed over from the mixed region of the spiritual and temporal into the purely political. The cause of the popes was that of the independence of Italy—the freedom and alliance of the great cities of the north, and the dependence of the centre and south on the Roman See. To keep the Emperor out of Italy—to create a barrier of powerful cities against him south of the Alps—to form behind themselves a compact territory, rich, removed from the first burst of invasion, and main-

taining a strong body of interested feudatories, had now become the great object of the popes. It may have been a wise policy on their part, for the maintenance of their spiritual influence, to attempt to connect their own independence with the political freedom of the Italian communities; but certain it is that the ideas and the characters which gave a religious interest and grandeur to the earlier part of the contest, appear but sparingly, if at all, in its later forms.

The two parties did not care to keep in view principles which their chiefs had lost sight of. The Emperor and the Pope were both real powers, able to protect and assist; and they divided between them those who required protection and assistance. Geographical position, the rivalry of neighbourhood, family tradition, private feuds, and above all private interest, were the main causes which assigned cities, families, and individuals to the Ghibelline or Guelf party. One party called themselves the Emperor's liegemen, and their watchword was authority and law; the other side were the liegemen of Holy Church, and their cry was liberty; and the distinction as a broad one is true. But a democracy would become Ghibelline, without scruple, if its neighbour town was Guelf; and among the Guelf liegemen of the Church and liberty the pride of blood and love of power were not a whit

inferior to that of their opponents. Yet, though the original principle of the contest was lost, and the political distinctions of parties were often interfered with by interest or accident, it is not impossible to trace in the two factions differences of temper, of moral and political inclinations, which though visible only on a large scale and in the mass, were quite sufficient to give meaning and reality to their mutual opposition. These differences had come down, greatly altered of course, from the quarrel in which the parties took their rise. The Ghibellines as a body reflected the worldliness, the licence, the irreligion, the reckless selfishness, the daring insolence, and at the same time the gaiety and pomp, the princely magnificence and generosity and largeness of mind of the house of Swabia; they were the men of the court and camp, imperious and haughty from ancient lineage or the Imperial cause, yet not wanting in the frankness and courtesy of nobility; careless of public opinion and public rights, but not dead to the grandeur of public objects and public services. Among them were found, or to them inclined, all who, whether from a base or a lofty ambition, desired to place their will above law*—the lord of the feudal castle, the robber-

* "Maghinardo da Susinana (*il Demonio*, Purg. 14) fu uno grande e savio tiranno . . . . gran castellano, e con molti fedeli: savio fu di guerra e bene avventuroso in piu battaglie, e al suo tempo fece gran

knight of the Apennine pass, the magnificent but terrible tyrants of the cities, the pride and shame of Italy, the Visconti and Scaligers. That renowned Ghibelline chief, whom the poet finds in the fiery sepulchres of the unbelievers with the great Ghibelline emperor and the princely Ghibelline cardinal—the disdainful and bitter but lofty spirit of Farinata degli Uberti, the conqueror, and then singly and at his own risk, the saviour of his country which had wronged him, represents the good as well as the bad side of his party.

The Guelfs, on the other hand, were the party of the middle classes; they rose out of and held to the people; they were strong by their compactness, their organisation in cities, their commercial relations and interests, their command of money. Further, they were professedly the party of strictness and religion, a profession which fettered them as little as their opponents were fettered by the respect they claimed for imperial law. But though by personal unscrupulousness and selfishness, and in instances of public vengeance, they sinned as deeply as the Ghibellines, they stood far more committed as a party to a public

cose. Ghibellino era di sua nazione e in sue opere; ma co' Fiorentini era Guelfo e nimico di tutti i loro nimici, o Guelfi o Ghibellini che fossono."—G. Vill. vii. 149. A Ghibelline by birth and disposition; yet, from circumstances, a close ally of the Guelfs of Florence.

meaning and purpose—to improvement in law and the condition of the poor, to a protest against the insolence of the strong, to the encouragement of industry. The genuine Guelf spirit was austere, frugal, independent, earnest, religious, fond of its home and Church, and of those celebrations which bound together Church and home; but withal very proud, very intolerant; in its higher form intolerant of evil, but intolerant always to whatever displeased it. Yet there was a grave and noble manliness about it which long kept it alive in Florence. It had not as yet turned itself against the practical corruptions of the Church, which was its ally; but this also it was to do, when the popes had forsaken the cause of liberty, and leagued themselves with the brilliant tyranny of the Medici. Then Savonarola invoked, and not in vain, the stern old Guelf spirit of resistance, of domestic purity and severity, and of domestic religion, against unbelief and licentiousness even in the Church; and the Guelf "*Piagnoni*" presented, in a more simple and generous shape, a resemblance to our own Puritans, as the Ghibellines often recall the coarser and worse features of our own Cavaliers.

In Florence, these distinctions had become mere nominal ones, confined to the great families who carried on their private feuds under the old party names, when Frederick II. once more gave them

their meaning. "Although the accursed Guelf and Ghibelline factions lasted amongst the nobles of Florence, and they often waged war among themselves out of private grudges, and took sides for the said factions, and held one with another, and those who called themselves Guelfs desired the establishment of the Pope and Holy Church, and those who called themselves Ghibellines favoured the Emperor and his adherents, yet withal the people and commonalty of Florence maintained itself in unity, to the well-being and honour and establishment of the commonwealth."* But the appearance on the scene of an emperor of such talent and bold designs revived the languid contest, and gave to party a cause, and to individual passions and ambition an impulse and pretext. The division between Guelf and Ghibelline again became serious, involved all Florence, armed house against house, and neighbourhood against neighbourhood, issued in merciless and vindictive warfare, grew on into a hopeless and deadly breach, and finally lost to Florence, without remedy or repair, half her noble houses and the love of the greatest of her sons. The old badge of their common country became to the two factions the sign of their implacable hatred; the white lily of Florence, borne by the

* G. Villani, vi. 33.

Ghibellines, was turned to red by the Guelfs, and the flower of two colours marked a civil strife as cruel and as fatal, if on a smaller scale, as that of the English roses.*

It was waged with the peculiar characteristics of Italian civil war. There the city itself was the scene of battle. A thirteenth century city in Italy bore on its face the evidence that it was built and arranged for such emergencies. Its crowded and narrow streets were a collection of rival castles, whose tall towers, rising thick and close over its roofs, or hanging perilously over its close courts, attested the emulous pride and the insecurity of Italian civic life. There, within a separate precinct, flanked and faced by jealous friends or deadly enemies, were clustered together the dwellings of the various members of each great house—their common home and the monument of their magnificence and pride, and capable of being, as was so often necessary, their common refuge. In these fortresses of the leading families, scattered about the city, were the various points of onset and recovery in civic battle; in the streets barricades were raised, mangonels and crossbows were plied from the towers, a series of separate combats raged through the city, till chance at length connected the attacks of one side,

* G. Villani, vi. 33, 43; *Parad.* 19.

or some panic paralysed the resistance of the other, or a conflagration interposed itself between the combatants, burning out at once Guelf and Ghibelline, and laying half Florence in ashes. Each party had their turn of victory; each, when vanquished, went into exile, and carried on the war outside the walls; each had their opportunity of remodelling the orders and framework of government, and each did so relentlessly at the cost of their opponents. They excluded classes, they proscribed families, they confiscated property, they sacked and burned warehouses, they levelled the palaces, and outraged the pride of their antagonists. To destroy was not enough, without adding to it the keenest and newest refinement of insult. Two buildings in Florence were peculiarly dear—among their "*cari luoghi*"—to the popular feeling and the Guelf party: the Baptistery of St. John, "il mio bel St. Giovanni," "to which all the good people resorted on Sundays,"* where they had all received baptism, where they had been married, where families were solemnly reconciled; and a tall and beautiful tower close by it, called the "Torre del Guardamorto," where the bodies of the "good people," who of old were all buried at S. Giovanni, rested on their way to the grave. The victorious Ghibellines, when they levelled

* G. Villani, vi. 33, iv. 10; *Inf.* 19; *Parad.* 25.

the Guelf towers, overthrew this one, and endeavoured to make it crush in its fall the sacred church, "which," says the old chronicler, "was prevented by a miracle." The Guelfs, when their day came, built the walls of Florence with the stones of Ghibelline palaces.* One great family stands out pre-eminent in this fierce conflict as the victim and monument of party war. The head of the Ghibellines was the proud and powerful house of the Uberti, who shared with another great Ghibelline family, the Pazzi, the valley of the upper Arno. They lighted up the war in the Emperor's cause. They supported its weight and guided it. In time of peace they were foremost and unrestrained in defiance of law and, in scorn of the people—in war, the people's fiercest and most active enemies. Heavy sufferers, in their property, and by the sword and axe, yet untamed and incorrigible, they led the van in that battle, so long remembered to their cost by the Guelfs, the battle of Monteaperti (1260)—

> Lo strazio, e 'l gran scempio
> Che fece l' Arbia colorata in rossa.—*Inf.* 10.

That the head of their house, Farinata, saved Florence from the vengeance of his meaner associates, was not enough to atone for the unpardonable wrongs

* G. Villani, vi. 39, 65.

which they had done to the Guelfs and the democracy. When the red lily of the Guelfs finally supplanted the white one as the arms of Florence, and the badge of Guelph triumph, they were proscribed for ever, like the Peisistratidæ and the Tarquins. In every amnesty their names were excepted. The site on which their houses had stood was never again to be built upon, and remains the Great Square of Florence; the architect of the Palace of the People was obliged to sacrifice its symmetry, and to place it awry, that its walls might not encroach on the accursed ground.* "They had been," says a writer, contemporary with Dante, speaking of the time when he also became an exile; "they had been for more than forty years outlaws from their country, nor ever found mercy nor pity, remaining always abroad in great state, nor ever abased their honour, seeing that they ever abode with kings and lords, and to great things applied themselves." † They were loved as they were hated. When under the protection of a cardinal one of them visited the city, and the chequered blue and gold blazon of their house was, after an interval of half a century, again seen in the streets of Florence; "many ancient Ghibelline men

* G. Villani, vi. 33, viii. 26; Vasari, *Arnolfo di Lapo*, i. 255 (Fir. 1846).

† *Dino Compagni*, p. 88.

and women pressed to kiss the arms,"* and even the common people did him honour.

But the fortunes of Florentine factions depended on other causes than merely the address or vigour of their leaders. From the year of Dante's birth and Charles's victory, Florence, as far as we shall have to do with it, became irrevocably Guelf. Not that the whole commonalty of Florence formally called itself Guelf, or that the Guelf party was co-extensive with it; but the city was controlled by Guelf councils, devoted to the objects of the great Guelf party, and received in return the support of that party in curbing the pride of the nobles, and maintaining democratic forms. The Guelf party of Florence, though it was the life and soul of the republic, and irresistible in its disposal of the influence and arms of Florence, and though it embraced a large number of the most powerful families, is always spoken of as something distinct from, and external to, the governing powers, and the whole body of the people. It was a body with a separate and self-constituted existence;—in the state and allied to it, but an independent element, holding on to a large and comprehensive union without the state. Its organisation in Florence is one of the most curious among the many curious combina-

Dino Compagni, p. 107.

tions which meet us in Italian history. After the final expulsion of the Ghibellines, the Guelf party took form as an institution, with definite powers, and a local existence. It appears with as distinct a shape as the Jacobin Club or the Orange Lodges, side by side with the government. It was a corporate body with a common seal, common property, not only in funds but lands—officers, archives, a common palace,* a great council, a secret committee, and last of all, a public accuser of the Ghibellines; of the confiscated Ghibelline estates one-third went to the republic, another third to compensate individual Guelfs, the rest was assigned to the Guelf party.† A pope, (Clement IV., 1265–68) had granted them his own arms‡; and their device, a red eagle clutching a serpent, may be yet seen, with the red lily, and the party-coloured banner of the commonalty, on the battlements of the Palazzo Vecchio.

But the expulsion of the Ghibellines did but little to restore peace. The great Guelf families, as old as many of the Ghibellines, had as little reverence as they for law or civic rights. Below these, the acknowledged nobility of Florence, were the leading families of the "people," houses created by successful industry or commerce, and pushing up into that privileged order,

* Giotto painted in it: Vasari, *Vit. di Giotto*, p. 314.
† G. Villani, vii. 2, 17. ‡ *Ibid.* vii. 2.

which, however ignored and even discredited by the laws, was fully recognised by feeling and opinion in the most democratic times of the republic. Rivalries and feuds, street broils and conspiracies, high-handed insolence from the great men, rough vengeance from the populace, still continued to vex jealous and changeful Florence. The popes sought in vain to keep in order their quarrelsome liegemen; to reconcile Guelf with Guelf, and even Guelf with Ghibelline. Embassies went and came, to ask for mediation and to proffer it; to apply the healing paternal hand; to present an obsequious and ostentatious submission. Cardinal legates came in state, and were received with reverential pomp; they formed private committees, and held assemblies, and made marriages; they harangued in honeyed words, and gained the largest promises; on one occasion the Great Square was turned into a vast theatre, and on this stage one hundred and fifty dissidents on each side came forward, and in the presence and with the benediction of the cardinal kissed each other on the mouth.* And if persuasion failed, the pope's representative hesitated not to excommunicate and interdict the faithful but obdurate city. But whether excommunicated or blessed, Florence could not be at peace; however wise and

* G. Villani, vii. 56.

subtle had been the peace-maker's arrangements, his departing *cortège* was hardly out of sight of the city before they were blown to the winds. Not more successful were the efforts of the sensible and moderate citizens who sighed for tranquillity within its walls. Dino Compagni's interesting though not very orderly narrative describes with great frankness, and with the perplexity of a simple-hearted man puzzled by the continual triumph of clever wickedness, the variety and the fruitlessness of the expedients devised by him and other good citizens against the resolute and incorrigible selfishness of the great Guelfs—ever, when checked in one form, breaking out in another; proof against all persuasion, all benefits; not to be bound by law, or compact, or oath; eluding or turning to its own account the deepest and sagest contrivances of constitutional wisdom.

A great battle won against Ghibelline Arezzo* raised the renown and the military spirit of the Guelf party, for the fame of the battle was very great; the hosts contained the choicest chivalry of either side, armed and appointed with emulous splendour. The fighting was hard, there was brilliant and conspicuous gallantry, and the victory was complete. It sealed Guelf ascendancy. The Ghibelline

* *Campaldino*, in 1289. G. Vill. vii. 131; *Dino Comp.* p. 14.

warrior-bishop of Arezzo fell, with three of the Uberti, and other Ghibelline chiefs. It was a day of trial. "Many that day who had been thought of great prowess were found dastards, and many who had never been spoken of were held in high esteem." It repaired the honour of Florence, and the citizens showed their feeling of its importance by mixing up the marvellous with its story. Its tidings came to Florence—so runs the tale in Villani, who declares what he "heard and saw" himself—at the very hour in which it was won. The Priors of the republic were resting in their palace during the noonday heat: suddenly the chamber door was shaken, and the cry heard: "Rise up! the Aretini are defeated." The door was opened, but there was no one; their servants had seen no one enter the palace, and no one came from the army till the hour of vespers, on a long summer's day. In this battle the Guelf leaders had won great glory. The hero of the day was the proudest, handsomest, craftiest, most winning, most ambitious, most unscrupulous Guelf noble in Florence—one of a family who inherited the spirit and recklessness of the proscribed Uberti, and did not refuse the popular epithet of "*Malefami*"—Corso Donati. He did not come back from the field of Campaldino, where he had won the battle by disobeying orders

with any increased disposition to yield to rivals, or court the populace, or respect other men's rights. Those rivals, too—and they also had fought gallantly in the post of honour at Campaldino—were such as he hated from his soul—rivals whom he despised, and who yet were too strong for him. His blood was ancient, they were upstarts; he was a soldier, they were traders; he was poor, they the richest men in Florence. They had come to live close to the Donati, they had bought the palace of an old Ghibelline family, they had enlarged, adorned, and fortified it, and kept great state there. They had crossed him in marriages, bargains, inheritances. They had won popularity, honour, influence; and yet they were but men of business, while he had a part in all the political movements of the day. He was the friend and intimate of lords and noblemen, with great connexions and famous through all Italy; they were the favourites of the common people for their kindness and good nature; they even showed consideration for Ghibellines. He was an accomplished man of the world, keen and subtle, "full of malicious thoughts, mischievous and crafty;" they were inexperienced in intrigue, and had the reputation of being clumsy and stupid. He was the most graceful and engaging of courtiers; they were not even gentlemen. Lastly, in

the debates of that excitable republic he was the most eloquent speaker, and they were tongue-tied.*

"There was a family," writes Dino Compagni, "who called themselves the Cerchi, men of low estate, but good merchants and very rich; and they dressed richly, and maintained many servants and horses, and made a brave show; and some of them bought the palace of the Conti Guidi, which was near the houses of the Pazzi and Donati, who were more ancient of blood but not so rich; therefore, seeing the Cerchi rise to great dignity, and that they had walled and enlarged the palace, and kept great state, the Donati began to have a great hatred against them." Villani gives the same account of the feud.† "It began in that quarter of scandal the Sesta of Porta S. Piero, between the Cerchi and Donati, on the one side through jealousy, on the other through churlish rudeness. Of the house of the Cerchi was head Messer Vieri de' Cerchi, and he and those of his house were people of great business, and powerful, and of great relationships, and most wealthy traders, so that their company was one of the greatest in the world; men they were of soft life, and who meant no harm; boorish and ill-mannered, like people who had come in a short time to great state and power. The Donati were gentlemen and

* *Dino Comp.* pp. 32, 75, 94, 133. † G. Vill. viii. 39.

warriors, and of no excessive wealth . . . They were neighbours in Florence and in the country, and by the conversation of their jealousy with the peevish boorishness of the others, arose the proud scorn that there was between them." The glories of Campaldino were not as oil on these troubled waters. The conquerors flouted each other all the more fiercely in the streets on their return, and ill-treated the lower people with less scruple. No gathering for festive or serious purposes could be held without tempting strife. A marriage, a funeral, a ball, a gay procession of cavaliers and ladies—any meeting where one stood while another sat, where horse or man might jostle another, where pride might be nettled or temper shown, was in danger of ending in blood. The lesser quarrels meanwhile ranged themselves under the greater ones; and these, especially that between the Cerchi and Donati, took more and more a political character. The Cerchi inclined more and more to the trading classes and the lower people; they threw themselves on their popularity, and began to hold aloof from the meetings of the "Parte Guelfa," while this organised body became an instrument in the hands of their opponents, a club of the nobles. Corso Donati, besides mischief of a more substantial kind, turned his ridicule on their solemn dulness and awkward speech, and his friends the jesters, one

Scampolino in particular, carried his gibes and nicknames all over Florence. The Cerchi received all in sullen and dogged indifference. They were satisfied with repelling attacks, and nursed their hatred.*

Thus the city was divided, and the attempts to check the factions only exasperated them. It was in vain that, when at times the government and the populace lost patience, severe measures were taken. It was in vain that the reformer, Gian della Bella, carried for a time his harsh "orders of justice" against the nobles, and invested popular vengeance with the solemnity of law and with the pomp and ceremony of a public act—that when a noble had been convicted of killing a citizen, the great officer, "Standard-bearer," as he was called, "of justice," issued forth in state and procession, with the banner of justice borne before him, with all his train, and at the head of the armed citizens, to the house of the criminal, and razed it to the ground. An eye-witness describes the effect of such chastisement:—"I, Dino Compagni, being Gonfalonier of Justice in 1293, went to their houses, and to those of their relations, and these I caused to be pulled down according to the laws. This beginning in the case of the other Gonfaloniers came to an evil effect; because, if they

* *Dino Compagni*, pp. 32, 34, 38.

demolished the houses according to the laws, the people said that they were cruel; and if they did not demolish them completely, they said that they were cowards; and many distorted justice for fear of the people." Gian della Bella was overthrown with few regrets even on the part of the people. Equally vain was the attempt to keep the peace by separating the leaders of the disturbances. They were banished by a kind of ostracism; they departed in ostentatious meekness, Corso Donato to plot at Rome, Vieri de' Cerchi to return immediately to Florence. Anarchy had got too fast a hold on the city, and it required a stronger hand than that of the pope, or the signory of the republic, to keep it down.

Yet Florence prospered. Every year it grew richer, more intellectual, more refined, more beautiful, more gay. With its anarchy there was no stagnation. Torn and divided as it was, its energy did not slacken, its busy and creative spirit was not deadened, its hopefulness not abated. The factions, fierce and personal as they were, did not hinder that interest in political ideas, that active and subtle study of the questions of civil government, that passion and ingenuity displayed in political contrivance, which now pervaded Northern Italy, everywhere marvellously patient and hopeful, though far from being equally successful. In Venice at the close of the

thirteenth century, that polity was finally settled and consolidated, by which she was great as long as cities could be imperial, and which even in its decay survived the monarchy of Louis XIV. and existed within the memory of living men. In Florence, the constructive spirit of law and order only resisted, but never triumphed. Yet it was at this time resolute and sanguine, ready with experiment and change, and not yet dispirited by continual failure. Political interest, however, and party contests were not sufficient to absorb and employ the citizens of Florence. Their genial and versatile spirit, so keen, so inventive, so elastic, which made them such hot and impetuous partisans, kept them from being only this. The time was one of growth; new knowledge, new powers, new tastes were opening to men — new pursuits attracted them. There was commerce, there was the school philosophy, there was the science of nature, there was ancient learning, there was the civil law, there were the arts, there was poetry, all rude as yet, and unformed, but full of hope—the living parents of mightier offspring. Frederick II. had once more opened Aristotle to the Latin world; he had given an impulse to the study of the great monuments of Roman legislation which was responded to through Italy; himself a poet, his example and his splendid court had made poetry fashionable. In the end of the thirteenth century a great stride was made at

Florence. While her great poet was growing up to manhood, as rapid a change went on in her streets, her social customs, the wealth of her citizens, their ideas of magnificence and beauty, their appreciation of literature. It was the age of growing commerce and travel; Franciscan missionaries had reached China, and settled there;* in 1294, Marco Polo returned to Venice, the first successful explorer of the East. The merchants of Florence lagged not; their field of operation was Italy and the West; they had their correspondents in London, Paris, and Bruges; they were the bankers of popes and kings.† And their city shows to this day the wealth and magnificence of the last years of the thirteenth century. The ancient buildings, consecrated in the memory of the Florentine people, were repaired, enlarged, adorned with marble and bronze—Or San Michele, the Badia, the Baptistery; and new buildings rose on a grander scale. In 1294 was begun the Mausoleum of the great Florentine dead, the Church of S. Croce. In the same year, a few months later, Arnolfo laid the deep foundations which were afterwards to bear up Brunelleschi's dome, and traced the plan of the magnificent cathedral. In 1298 he began

* See the curious letters of *John de Monte Corvino*, about his mission in Cathay, 1289–1305, in Wadding, vi. 69.

† *E.g.* the *Mozzi*, of Greg. X.; *Peruzzi*, of Philip le Bel; *Spini*, of Boniface VIII.; *Cerchi del Garbo*, of Benedict XI. (G. Vill. vii. 42, viii. 63, 71; *Dino Compº* p. 35).

to raise a Town-hall worthy of the Republic, and of being the habitation of its magistrates, the frowning mass of the Palazzo Vecchio. In 1299, the third circle of the walls was commenced, with the benediction of bishops, and the concourse of all the "lords and orders" of Florence. And Giotto was now beginning to throw Cimabue into the shade—Giotto, the shepherd's boy, painter, sculptor, architect, and engineer at once, who a few years later was to complete and crown the architectural glories of Florence by that masterpiece of grace, his marble Campanile.

Fifty years made then all that striking difference in domestic habits, in the materials of dress, in the value of money, which they have usually made in later centuries. The poet of the fourteenth century describes the proudest nobleman of a hundred years before "with his leathern girdle and clasp of bone;" and in one of the most beautiful of all poetic celebrations of the good old time, draws the domestic life of ancient Florence in the household where his ancestor was born:

A così riposato, a così bello
Viver di cittadini, a così fida
Cittadinanza, a così dolce ostello
Maria mi diè, chiamata in alte grida.—*Par.* c. 15.*

* Florence, confined within that ancient wall,
Whence still the chimes at noon and evening sound,
Was sober, modest, and at peace with all.
* * *

There high-born dames, he says, still plied the distaff and the loom; still rocked the cradle with the words which their own mothers had used; or working with their maidens, told them old tales of the forefathers of the city, "of the Trojans, of Fiesole, and of Rome." Villani still finds this rudeness within forty years of the end of the century, almost within the limits of his own and Dante's life; and speaks of that "old first people," *il primo Popolo Vecchio*, with their coarse food and expenditure, their leather jerkins, and plain close gowns, their small dowries and late marriages, as if they were the first founders of the city, and not a generation which had lasted on into his own.* Twenty years later, his story is of the gaiety, the riches, the profuse munificence, the brilliant festivities, the careless and joyous life, which attracted foreigners to Florence as the city of pleasure; of companies of

Myself have seen Bellincion Berti pace
The street in leathern belt; his lady come
Forth from her toilet with unpainted face.
* * *
Oh happy wives! each soon to lay her head
In her own tomb; and no one yet compelled
To weep deserted in a lonely bed.
* * *
To such pure life of beauty and repose—
Such faithful citizens—such happy men—
The virgin gave me, when my mother's throes
Forced her with cries to call on Mary's name.—WRIGHT.

* G. Vill. vi. 69 (1259).

a thousand or more, all clad in white robes, under a lord, styled "of Love," passing their time in sports and dances; of ladies and knights, "going through the city with trumpets and other instruments, with joy and gladness," and meeting together in banquets evening and morning; entertaining illustrious strangers, and honourably escorting them on horseback in their passage through the city; tempting by their liberality, courtiers, and wits, and minstrels, and jesters, to add to the amusements of Florence.* Nor were these the boisterous triumphs of unrefined and coarse merriment. How variety of character was drawn out, how its more delicate elements were elicited and tempered, how nicely it was observed, and how finely drawn, let the racy and open-eyed story-tellers of Florence testify.

Not perhaps in these troops of revellers, but amid music and song, and in the pleasant places of social and private life, belonging to the Florence of arts and poetry, not to the Florence of factions and strife, should we expect to find the friend of the sweet singer, Casella, and of the reserved and bold speculator, Guido Cavalcanti; the mystic poet of the *Vita Nuova*, so sensitive and delicate, trembling at a gaze or a touch, recording visions, painting angels,

* G. Vill. vii. 89 (1283).

composing Canzoni and commenting on them; finally devoting himself to the austere consolations of deep study. To superadd to such a character that of a democratic politician of the middle ages, seems an incongruous and harsh combination. Yet it was a real one in this instance. The scholar's life is, in our idea of it, far separated from the practical and the political; we have been taught by our experience to disjoin enthusiasm in love, in art, in what is abstract or imaginative, from keen interest and successful interference in the affairs and conflicts of life. The practical man may sometimes be also a *dilettante*; but the dreamer or the thinker, wisely or indolently, keeps out of the rough ways where real passions and characters meet and jostle, or if he ventures, seldom gains honour there. The separation, though a natural one, grows wider as society becomes more vast and manifold, as its ends, functions, and pursuits are disentangled, while they multiply. But in Dante's time, and in an Italian city, it was not such a strange thing that the most refined and tender interpreter of feeling, the popular poet, whose verses touched all hearts, and were in every mouth, should be also at once the ardent follower of all abstruse and difficult learning, and a prominent character among those who administered the State. In that narrow sphere of action, in that period of dawning powers and circumscribed

knowledge, it seemed no unreasonable hope or unwise ambition to attempt the compassing of all science, and to make it subserve and illustrate the praise of active citizenship.* Dante, like other literary celebrities of the time, was not less from the custom of the day, than from his own purpose, a public man. He took his place among his fellow-citizens; he went out to war with them; he fought, it is said, among the skirmishers at the great Guelf victory of Campaldino; to qualify himself for office in the democracy, he enrolled himself in one of the Guilds of the people, and was matriculated in the "Art" of the Apothecaries; he served the State as its agent abroad; he went on important missions to the cities and courts of Italy—according to a Florentine tradition, which enumerates fourteen distinct embassies, even to Hungary and France. In the memorable year of Jubilee, 1300, he was one of the Priors of the Republic. There is no shrinking from fellowship and co-operation and conflict with the keen or bold men of the market-place and council-hall, in that mind of exquisite and, as drawn by itself, exaggerated sensibility. The doings and characters of men, the workings of society, the fortunes of Italy, were watched and thought of with as deep an interest as the courses of the stars, and read

* *Vide* the opening of the *De Monarchia*.

in the real spectacle of life with as profound emotion as in the miraculous page of Virgil; and no scholar ever read Virgil with such feeling—no astronomer ever watched the stars with more eager inquisitiveness. The whole man opens to the world around him; all affections and powers, soul and sense, diligently and thoughtfully directed and trained, with free and concurrent and equal energy, with distinct yet harmonious purposes, seek out their respective and appropriate objects, moral, intellectual, natural, spiritual, in that admirable scene and hard field where man is placed to labour and love, to be exercised, proved, and judged.

In a fresco in the chapel of the old palace of the Podestà * at Florence is a portrait of Dante, said to be by the hand of his contemporary Giotto. It was discovered in 1841 under the whitewash, and a tracing made by Mr. Seymour Kirkup has been reproduced in fac-simile by the Arundel Society. The fresco was afterwards restored or repainted with no happy success. He is represented as he might have been in the year of Campaldino (1289). The countenance is youthful yet manly, more manly than it appears in the engravings of the picture; but it only suggests the strong deep features of the well-known traditional

* The Bargello, a prison (1850); a museum (1878). *V.* Vasari, p. 311.

face. He is drawn with much of the softness, and melancholy pensive sweetness, and with something also of the quaint stiffness of the *Vita Nuova*—with his flower and his book. With him is drawn his master, Brunetto Latini,* and Corso Donati. We do not know what occasion led Giotto thus to associate him with the great "Baron." Dante was, indeed, closely connected with the Donati. The dwelling of his family was near theirs, in the "Quarter of Scandal," the Ward of the Porta S. Piero. He married a daughter of their house, Madonna Gemma. None of his friends are commemorated with more affection than the companion of his light and wayward days, remembered not without a shade of anxious sadness, yet with love and hope, Corso's brother, Forese.† No sweeter spirit sings and smiles in the illumined spheres of Paradise, than she whom Forese remembers as on earth one,

> Che tra bella e buona
> Non so qual fosse più—‡

and who, from the depth of her heavenly joy, teaches the poet that in the lowest place among the blessed

* He died in 1294. G. Vill. viii. 10. † *Purgat.* c. 23.
‡ *Ibid.* c. 24.

My sister, good and beautiful—which most I know not.
WRIGHT.

there can be no envy*—the sister of Forese and Corso, Piccarda. The *Commedia*, though it speaks, as if in prophecy, of Corso's miserable death, avoids the mention of his name.† Its silence is so remarkable as to seem significant. But though history does not group together Corso and Dante, the picture represents the truth—their fortunes were linked together. They were actors in the same scene—at this distance of time two of the most prominent; though a scene very different from that calm and grave assembly, which Giotto's placid pencil has drawn on the old chapel wall.

The outlines of this part of Dante's history are so well known that it is not necessary to dwell on them; and more than the outlines we know not. The family quarrels came to a head, issued in parties, and the parties took names; they borrowed them from two rival factions in a neighbouring town, Pistoia, whose feud was imported into Florence; and the Guelfs became divided into the Black Guelfs who were led by the Donati, and the White Guelfs who sided with the Cerchi.‡ It still professed to be but a family feud, confined to the great houses; but they were too powerful and Florence too small for it not to affect the whole Republic. The middle classes and the

* *Parad.* c. 3. † *Purg.* c. 24, 82–87.

‡ In 1300. G. Villani, viii. 38, 39.

artisans looked on, and for a time not without satisfaction, at the strife of the great men; but it grew evident that one party must crush the other, and become dominant in Florence; and of the two, the Cerchi and their White adherents were less formidable to the democracy than the unscrupulous and overbearing Donati, with their military renown and lordly tastes; proud not merely of being nobles, but Guelf nobles; always loyal champions, once the martyrs, and now the hereditary assertors, of the great Guelf cause. The Cerchi with less character and less zeal, but rich, liberal, and showy, and with more of rough kindness and vulgar good-nature for the common people, were more popular in Guelf Florence than the "Parte Guelfa;" and, of course, the Ghibellines wished them well. Both the contemporary historians of Florence lead us to think that they might have been the governors and guides of the Republic—if they had chosen, and had known how; and both, though condemning the two parties equally, seemed to have thought that this would have been the best result for the State. But the accounts of both, though they are very different writers, agree in their scorn of the leaders of the White Guelfs. They were upstarts, purse-proud, vain, and coarse-minded; and they dared to aspire to an ambition which they were too dull and too cowardly to pursue, when the game

was in their hands. They wished to rule; but when they might, they were afraid. The commons were on their side, the moderate men, the party of law, the lovers of republican government, and for the most part the magistrates; but they shrank from their fortune, "more from cowardice than from goodness, because they exceedingly feared their adversaries."* Boniface VIII. had no prepossessions in Florence, except for energy and an open hand; the side which was most popular he would have accepted and backed; but "he would not lose," he said, "the men for the women." "*Io non voglio perdere gli uomini per le femminelle.*"† If the Black party furnished types for the grosser or fiercer forms of wickedness in the poet's Hell, the White party surely were the originals of that picture of stupid and cowardly selfishness, in the miserable crowd who moan and are buffeted in the vestibule of the Pit, mingled with the angels who dared neither to rebel nor be faithful, but "*were for themselves*;" and whoever it may be who is singled out in the "setta dei cattivi," for deeper and special scorn—he,

Che fece per viltà il gran rifiuto—‡

the idea was derived from the Cerchi in Florence.

* *Dino Comp.* p. 45. † *Ibid.* p. 62. ‡ *Inf.* c. 3, 60.

A French prince was sent by the Pope to mediate and make peace in Florence. The Black Guelfs and Corso Donati came with him. The magistrates were overawed and perplexed.. The White party were, step by step, amused, entrapped, led blindly into false plots, entangled in the elaborate subtleties, and exposed with all the zest and mockery, of Italian intrigue—finally chased out of their houses and from the city, condemned unheard, outlawed, ruined in name and property, by the Pope's French mediator. With them fell many citizens who had tried to hold the balance between the two parties: for the leaders of the Black Guelfs were guilty of no errors of weakness. In two extant lists of the proscribed—condemned by default, for corruption and various crimes, especially for hindering the entrance into Florence of Charles de Valois, to a heavy fine and banishment—then, two months after, for contumacy, to be burned alive if he ever fell into the hands of the Republic—appears the name of Dante Alighieri; and more than this, concerning the history of his expulsion, we know not.*

Of his subsequent life, history tells us little more than the general character. He acted for a time in concert with the expelled party, when they attempted

* Pelli, *Memorie per servire alla vita di Dante.* Fir. 1823, pp. 105, 106.

to force their way back to Florence; he gave them up at last in scorn and despair: but he never returned to Florence. And he found no new home for the rest of his days. Nineteen years, from his exile to his death, he was a wanderer. The character is stamped on his writings. History, tradition, documents, all scanty or dim, do but disclose him to us at different points, appearing here and there, we are not told how or why. One old record, discovered by antiquarian industry, shows him in a village church near Florence, planning, with the Cerchi and the White party, an attack on the Black Guelfs. In another, he appears in the Val di Magra, making peace between its small potentates: in another, as the inhabitant of a certain street in Padua. The traditions of some remote spots about Italy still connect his name with a ruined tower, a mountain glen, a cell in a convent. In the recollections of the following generation, his solemn and melancholy form mingled reluctantly, and for awhile, in the brilliant court of the Scaligers; and scared the women, as a visitant of the other world, as he passed by their doors in the streets of Verona. Rumour brings him to the West —with probability to Paris, more doubtfully to Oxford. But little certain can be made out about the places where he was an honoured and admired, but it may be, not always a welcome guest, till we find

him sheltered, cherished, and then laid at last to rest, by the Lords of Ravenna. There he still rests, in a small, solitary chapel, built, not by a Florentine, but a Venetian. Florence, "that mother of little love," asked for his bones; but rightly asked in vain.* His place of repose is better in those remote and forsaken streets "by the shore of the Adrian Sea," hard by the last relics of the Roman Empire—the mausoleum of the children of Theodosius, and the mosaics of Justinian—than among the assembled dead of S. Croce, or amid the magnificence of S. Maria del Fiore.†

The *Commedia*, at the first glance, shows the traces of its author's life. It is the work of a wanderer. The very form in which it is cast is that of a journey, difficult, toilsome, perilous, and full of change. It is more than a working out of that touching phraseology of the middle ages, in which "the way" was the technical theological expression

* See Dr. Barlow's *Sixth Centenary Festivals of Dante.* (1866.)

† These notices have been carefully collected by *Pelli*, who seems to have left little to glean (*Memorie*, &c. Ed. 2da, 1823). A few additions have been made by *Gerini* (*Mem. Stor. della Lunigiana*), and *Troya* (*Veltro Allegorico*), but they are not of much importance. *Arrivabene* (*Secolo di Dante*) has brought together a mass of illustration which is very useful, and would be more so, if he were more careful, and quoted his authorities. *Balbo* arranges these materials with sense and good feeling; though, as a writer, he is below his subject. A few traits and anecdotes may be found in the novelists—as Sacchetti.

for this mortal life; and "*viator*" meant man in his state of trial, as "*comprehensor*" meant man made perfect, having attained to his heavenly country. It is more than merely this. The writer's mind is full of the recollections and definite images of his various journeys. The permanent scenery of the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, very variously and distinctly marked, is that of travel. The descent down the sides of the Pit, and the ascent of the Sacred Mountain, show one familiar with such scenes—one who had climbed painfully in perilous passes, and grown dizzy on the brink of narrow ledges over sea or torrent. It is scenery from the gorges of the Alps and Apennines, or the terraces and precipices of the Riviera. Local reminiscences abound:—the severed rocks of the Adige Valley—the waterfall of S. Benedetto—the crags of Pietra-pana and S. Leo, which overlook the plains of Lucca and Ravenna—the "fair river" that flows among the poplars between Chiaveri and Sestri—the marble quarries of Carrara—the "rough and desert ways between Lerici and Turbia," and those towery cliffs, going sheer into the deep sea at Noli, which travellers on the Corniche road some thirty years ago may yet remember with fear. Mountain experience furnished that picture of the traveller caught in an Alpine mist and gradually climbing above it; seeing the vapours grow thin, and the sun's orb appear faintly through

them; and issuing at last into sunshine on the mountain top, while the light of sunset was lost already on the shores below:

Ai raggi, morti già nei bassi lidi :—*Purg.* 17.

or that image of the cold dull shadow over the torrent, beneath the Alpine fir—

Un' ombra smorta
Qual sotto foglie verdi e rami nigri
Sovra suoi freddi rivi, l' Alpe porta :—*Purg.* 33.*

or of the large snow-flakes falling without wind, among the mountains—

d' un cader lento
Piovean di fuoco dilatate falde
Come di neve in Alpe senza vento.—*Inferno*, 14.†

He delights in a local name and local image—the boiling pitch, and the clang of the shipwrights in the arsenal of Venice—the sepulchral fields of Arles and Pola—the hot-spring of Viterbo—the hooded monks of Cologne—the dykes of Flanders and Padua—the Maremma, with its rough brushwood, its wild boars,

* A death-like shade—
Like that beneath black boughs and foliage green
O'er the cool streams in Alpine glens display'd.—WRIGHT.

† O'er all the sandy desert falling slow,
Were shower'd dilated flakes of fire, like snow
On Alpine summits, when the wind is low.—IBID.

its snakes, and fevers. He had listened to the south wind among the pine tops, in the forest by the sea, at Ravenna. He had watched under the Carisenda tower at Bologna, and seen the driving clouds "give away their motion" to it, and make it seem to be falling; and had noticed how at Rome the October sun sets between Corsica and Sardinia.* His images of the sea are numerous and definite—the ship backing out of the tier in harbour, the diver plunging after the fouled anchor, the mast rising, the ship going fast before the wind, the water closing in its wake, the arched backs of the porpoises the forerunners of a gale, the admiral watching everything from poop to prow, the oars stopping altogether at the sound of the whistle, the swelling sails becoming slack when the mast snaps and falls.† Nowhere could we find so many of the most characteristic and strange sensations of the traveller touched with such truth. Everyone knows the lines which speak of the voyager's sinking of heart on the first evening at sea, and of the longings wakened in the traveller at the beginning of his journey by the distant evening bell‡; the traveller's *morning* feelings are not less delicately noted—the strangeness on first waking in the open air with the sun high; morning

* *Inf.* 31, 18.

† *Ibid.* 17, 16, 31; *Purg.* 24; *Par.* 2; *Inf.* 22; *Purg.* 30; *Par.* 25; *Inf.* 7.

‡ *Purg.* 8. "Era già l' ora," &c.

thoughts, as day by day he wakes nearer home; the morning sight of the sea-beach quivering in the early light; the tarrying and lingering, before setting out in the morning *—

> Noi eravam lunghesso 'l mare ancora,
> Come gente che pensa al suo cammino,
> Che va col cuore, e col corpo dimora.†

He has recorded equally the anxiety, the curiosity, the suspicion with which, in those times, stranger met and eyed stranger on the road; and a still more characteristic trait is to be found in those lines where he describes the pilgrim gazing around in the church of his vow, and thinking how he shall tell of it:

> E quasi peregrin che si ricrea
> Nel tempio del suo voto riguardando,
> E spera già ridir com' ello stea :—*Parad.* 31.‡

or again, in that description, so simple and touching, of his thoughts while waiting to see the relic for which he left his home:

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* *Purg.* 19, 27, 1, 2.

† By ocean's shore we still prolonged our stay
Like men, who, thinking of a journey near,
Advance in thought, while yet their limbs delay.—WRIGHT.

‡ And like a pilgrim who with fond delight
Surveys the temple he has vow'd to see,
And hopes one day its wonders to recite.—IBID.

Quale è colui che forse di Croazia
Viene a veder la Veronica nostra,
Che per l' antica fama non si sazia,
Ma dice nel pensier, fin che si mostra ;
Signor mio Gesù Cristo, Dio verace,
Or fu sì fatta la sembianza vostra?—*Parad.* 31.*

Of these years then of disappointment and exile the *Divina Commedia* was the labour and fruit. A story in Boccaccio's life of Dante, told with some detail, implies indeed that it was begun, and some progress made in it, while Dante was yet in Florence—begun in Latin, and he quotes three lines of it—continued afterwards in Italian. This is not impossible ; indeed the germ and presage of it may be traced in the *Vita Nuova.* The idealised saint is there, in all the grace of her pure and noble humbleness, the guide

* Like one who, from Croatia come to see
Our Veronica (image long adored),
Gazes, as though content he ne'er could be—
Thus musing, while the relic is pourtray'd—
"Jesus my God, my Saviour and my Lord,
O were thy features these I see display'd ?"—WRIGHT.

Quella imagine benedetta la quale Gesù Cristo lasciò a noi per esempio della sua bellissima figura.—*Vita Nuova,* p. 353.

He speaks of the pilgrims going to Rome to see it ; compare also the sonnet to the pilgrims, p. 355 :

Deh peregrini, che pensosi andate
Forse di cosa, che non v'è presente,
Venite voi di si lontana gente,
Com' alla vista voi ne dimostrate.

and safeguard of the poet's soul. She is already in glory with Mary the queen of angels. She already beholds the face of the Everblessed. And the *envoye* of the *Vita Nuova* is the promise of the *Commedia*. "After this sonnet," (in which he describes how beyond the widest sphere of heaven his love had beheld a lady receiving honour, and dazzling by her glory the unaccustomed spirit)—"After this sonnet there appeared to me a marvellous vision, in which I saw things which made me resolve not to speak more of this blessed one, until such time as I should be able to indite more worthily of her. And to attain to this, I study to the utmost of my power, as she truly knows. So that, if it shall be the pleasure of Him, by whom all things live, that my life continue for some years, I hope to say of her that which never hath been said of any woman. And afterwards, may it please Him, who is the Lord of kindness, that my soul may go to behold the glory of her lady, that is, of that blessed Beatrice, who gloriously gazes on the countenance of Him, *qui est per omnia secula benedictus*."* It would be wantonly violating probability and the unity of a great life, to suppose that this purpose, though transformed, was ever forgotten or laid aside. The poet knew not indeed what he was promising, what he was

* *Vita Nuova*, last paragraph. See *Purg.* 30; *Parad.* 30, 6, 28–33.

pledging himself to—through what years of toil and anguish he would have to seek the light and the power he had asked; in what form his high venture should be realised. But the *Commedia* is the work of no light resolve, and we need not be surprised at finding the resolve and the purpose at the outset of the poet's life. We may freely accept the key supplied by the words of the *Vita Nuova.* The spell of boyhood is never broken, through the ups and downs of life. His course of thought advances, alters, deepens, but is continuous. From youth to age, from the first glimpse to the perfect work, the same idea abides with him, "even from the flower till the grape was ripe." It may assume various changes—an image of beauty, a figure of philosophy, a voice from the other world, a type of heavenly wisdom and joy—but still it holds, in self-imposed and willing thraldom, that creative and versatile and tenacious spirit. It was the dream and hope of too deep and strong a mind to fade and come to naught—to be other than the seed of the achievement and crown of life. But with all faith in the star and the freedom of genius, we may doubt whether the prosperous citizen would have done that which was done by the man without a home. Beatrice's glory might have been sung in grand though barbarous Latin to the literati of the fourteenth century; or a poem of new beauty might have fixed the language

and opened the literature of modern Italy; but it could hardly have been the *Commedia*. That belongs, in its date and its greatness, to the time when sorrow had become the poet's daily portion, and the condition of his life.

The *Commedia* is a novel and startling apparition in literature. Probably it has been felt by some, who have approached it with the reverence due to a work of such renown, that the world has been generous in placing it so high. It seems so abnormal, so lawless, so reckless of all ordinary proprieties and canons of feeling, taste, and composition. It is rough and abrupt; obscure in phrase and allusion, doubly obscure in purpose. It is a medley of all subjects usually kept distinct: scandal of the day and transcendental science, politics and confessions, coarse satire and angelic joy, private wrongs, with the mysteries of the faith, local names and habitations of earth, with visions of hell and heaven. It is hard to keep up with the ever-changing current of feeling, to pass as the poet passes, without effort or scruple, from tenderness to ridicule, from hope to bitter scorn or querulous complaint, from high-raised devotion to the calmness of prosaic subtleties or grotesque detail. Each separate element and vein of thought has its precedent, but not their amalgamation. Many had written visions of the unseen world, but they had

not blended with them their personal fortunes. S. Augustine had taught the soul to contemplate its own history, and had traced its progress from darkness to light;* but he had not interwoven with it the history of Italy, and the consummation of all earthly destinies. Satire was no new thing; Juvenal had given it a moral, some of the Provençal poets a political turn; S. Jerome had kindled into it fiercely and bitterly even while expounding the Prophets; but here it streams forth in all its violence, within the precincts of the eternal world, and alternates with the hymns of the blessed. Lucretius had drawn forth the poetry of nature and its laws; Virgil and Livy had unfolded the poetry of the Roman empire; S. Augustine, the still grander poetry of the history of the City of God; but none had yet ventured to weave into one the three wonderful threads. And yet the scope of the Italian poet, vast and comprehensive as the issue of all things, universal as the government which directs nature and intelligence, forbids him not to stoop to the lowest caitiff he has ever despised, the minutest fact in nature that has ever struck his eye, the merest personal association which hangs pleasantly in his memory. Writing for all time, he scruples not to mix with all that is august

* See *Convito*, 1, 2.

and permanent in history and prophecy, incidents the most transient, and names the most obscure; to waste an immortality of shame or praise on those about whom his own generation were to inquire in vain. Scripture history runs into profane; Pagan legends teach their lesson side by side with Scripture scenes and miracles; heroes and poets of heathenism, separated from their old classic world, have their place in the world of faith, discourse with Christians of Christian dogmas, and even mingle with the Saints; Virgil guides the poet through his fear and his penitence to the gates of Paradise.

This feeling of harsh and extravagant incongruity, of causeless and unpardonable darkness, is perhaps the first impression of many readers of the *Commedia*. But probably as they read on, there will mingle with this a sense of strange and unusual grandeur, arising not alone from the hardihood of the attempt, and the mystery of the subject, but from the power and the character of the poet. It will strike them that words cut deeper than is their wont; that from that wild uncongenial imagery, thoughts emerge of singular truth and beauty. Their dissatisfaction will be chequered, even disturbed—for we can often bring ourselves to sacrifice much for the sake of a clear and consistent view—by the appearance, amid much that repels them, of proofs undeniable and accumulating

of genius as mighty as it is strange. Their perplexity and disappointment may grow into distinct condemnation, or it may pass into admiration and delight; but no one has ever come to the end of the *Commedia* without feeling that if it has given him a new view and specimen of the wildness and unaccountable waywardness of the human mind, it has also added, as few other books have, to his knowledge of its feelings, its capabilities, and its grasp, and suggested larger and more serious thoughts, for which he may be grateful, concerning that unseen world of which he is even here a member.

Dante would not have thanked his admirers for becoming apologists. Those in whom the sense of imperfection and strangeness overpowers sympathy for grandeur, and enthusiasm for nobleness, and joy in beauty, he certainly would have left to themselves. But neither would he teach any that he was leading them along a smooth and easy road. The *Commedia* will always be a hard and trying book; nor did the writer much care that it should be otherwise. Much of this is no doubt to be set down to its age; much of its roughness and extravagance, as well as of its beauty—its allegorical spirit, its frame and scenery. The idea of a visionary voyage through the worlds of pain and bliss is no invention of the poet—it was one of the commonest and most familiar medieval vehicles

of censure or warning; and those who love to trace the growth and often strange fortunes of popular ideas, or whose taste leads them to disbelieve in genius, and track the parentage of great inventions to the foolish and obscure, may find abundant materials in the literature of legends.* But his own age—the age which received the *Commedia* with mingled enthusiasm and wonder, and called it the Divine, was as much perplexed as we are, though probably rather pleased thereby than offended. That within a century after its composition, in the more famous cities and universities of Italy, Florence, Venice, Bologna, and Pisa, chairs should have been founded, and illustrious men engaged to lecture on it, is a strange homage to its power, even in that time of quick feeling; but as strange and great a proof of its obscurity. What is dark and forbidding in it was scarcely more clear to the poet's contemporaries. And he, whose last object was amusement, invites no audience but a patient and confiding one.

O voi che siete in piccioletta barca,
Desiderosi di ascoltar, seguiti
Dietro al mio legno che cantando varca,

Tornate a riveder li vostri liti:
Non vi mettete in pelago, che forse
Perdendo me rimarreste smarriti.

* *Vide* Ozanam, *Dante*, pp. 535, *sqq.* Ed. 2de.

L' acqua ch' io prendo giammai non si corse:
Minerva spira, e conducemi Apollo,
E nuove muse mi dimostran l' Orse.

Voi altri pochi, che drizzaste 'l collo
Per tempo al pan degli angeli, del quale
Vivesi qui, ma non si vien satollo,

Metter potete ben per l' alto sale
Vostro navigio, servando mio solco
Dinanzi all' acqua che ritorna eguale.

Que gloriosi che passaro a Colco,
Non s' ammiraron, come voi farete,
Quando Jason vider fatto bifolco.—*Parad.* 2.*

The character of the *Commedia* belongs much more, in its excellence and its imperfections, to the

* O ye who fain would listen to my song,
Following in little bark full eagerly
My venturous ship, that chanting hies along,

Turn back unto your native shores again;
Tempt not the deep, lest haply losing me,
In unknown paths bewildered ye remain.

I am the first this voyage to essay;
Minerva breathes—Apollo is my guide;
And new-born muses do the Bears display.

Ye other few, who have look'd up on high
For angels' food betimes, e'en here supplied
Largely, but not enough to satisfy,—

Mid the deep ocean ye your course may take,
My track pursuing the pure waters through,
Ere reunites the quickly-closing wake.

Those glorious ones, who drove of yore their prow
To Colchos, wonder'd not as ye will do,
When they saw Jason working at the plough.

WRIGHT'S *Dante.*

poet himself and the nature of his work, than to his age. That cannot screen his faults; nor can it arrogate to itself, it must be content to share, his glory. His leading idea and line of thought was much more novel then than it is now, and belongs much more to the modern than the medieval world. The *Story of a Life*, the poetry of man's journey through the wilderness to his true country, is now in various and very different shapes as hackneyed a form of imagination, as an allegory, an epic, a legend of chivalry were in former times. Not, of course, that any time has been without its poetical feelings and ideas on the subject; and never were they deeper and more diversified, more touching and solemn, than in the ages that passed from S. Augustine and S. Gregory to S. Thomas and S. Bonaventura. But a philosophical poem, where they were not merely the colouring, but the subject, an *epos* of the soul, placed for its trial in a fearful and wonderful world, with relations to time and matter, history and nature, good and evil, the beautiful, the intelligible, and the mysterious, sin and grace, the infinite and the eternal —and having in the company and under the influences of other intelligences, to make its choice, to struggle, to succeed or fail, to gain the light, or be lost—this was a new and unattempted theme. It has been often tried since, in faith or doubt, in egotism, in

sorrow, in murmuring, in affectation, sometimes in joy—in various forms, in prose and verse, completed or fragmentary, in reality or fiction, in the direct or the shadowed story, in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, in Rousseau's *Confessions*, in *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust*, in the *Excursion*. It is common enough now for the poet, in the faith of human sympathy, and in the sense of the unexhausted vastness of his mysterious subject, to believe that his fellows will not see without interest and profit, glimpses of his own path and fortunes—hear from his lips the disclosure of his chief delights, his warnings, his fears—follow the many-coloured changes, the impressions and workings, of a character, at once the contrast and the counterpart to their own. But it was a new path then; and he needed to be, and was, a bold man, who first opened it—a path never trod without peril, usually with loss or failure.

And certainly no great man ever made less secret to himself of his own genius. He is at no pains to rein in or to dissemble his consciousness of power, which he has measured without partiality, and feels sure will not fail him. "Fidandomi di me più che di un altro"*—is a reason which he assigns without reserve. We look with the distrust and hesitation of modern days, yet, in spite of ourselves, not without

* *Convito*, I, 10.

admiration and regret, at such frank hardihood. It was more common once than now. When the world was young, it was more natural and allowable—it was often seemly and noble. Men knew not their difficulties as we know them—we, to whom time, which has taught so much wisdom, has brought so many disappointments—we who have seen how often the powerful have fallen short, and the nóble gone astray, and the most admirable missed their perfection. It is becoming in us to distrust ourselves—to be shy if we cannot be modest; it is but a respectful tribute to human weakness and our brethren's failures. But there was a time when great men dared to claim their greatness—not in foolish self-complacency, but in unembarrassed and majestic simplicity, in magnanimity and truth, in the consciousness of a serious and noble purpose, and of strength to fulfil it. Without passion, without elation as without shrinking, the poet surveys his superiority and his high position, as something external to him; he has no doubts about it, and affects none. He would be a coward, if he shut his eyes to what he could do; as much a trifler in displaying reserve as ostentation. Nothing is more striking in the *Commedia* than the serene and unhesitating confidence with which he announces himself the heir and reviver of the poetic power so long lost to the world—the heir and reviver of it in all its

fulness. He doubts not of the judgment of posterity. One has arisen who shall throw into the shade all modern reputations, who shall bequeath to Christendom the glory of that name of Poet, "che più dura e più onora," hitherto the exclusive boast of heathenism, and claim the rare honours of the laurel:

> Si rade volte, padre, se ne coglie
> Per trionfare o Cesare o poeta,
> (Colpa e vergogna dell' umane voglie),
> Che partorir letizia in su la lieta
> Delfica deità dovrìa la fronda
> Peneia quando alcun di se asseta.—*Parad.* I.*

He has but to follow his star to be sure of the glorious port:† he is the master of language: he can give fame to the dead—no task or enterprise appals him, for whom spirits keep watch in heaven, and angels have visited the shades—"tal si partì dal cantar alleluia:"—who is Virgil's foster child and familiar friend. Virgil bids him lay aside the last vestige of fear. Virgil is to "crown him king and priest over

* For now so rarely Poet gathers these,
Or Cæsar, winning an immortal praise
(Shame unto man's degraded energies),
That joy should to the Delphic God arise
When haply any one aspires to gain
The high reward of the Peneian prize.—WRIGHT.

† Brunetto Latini's Prophecy, *Inf.* 15.

himself,"* for a higher venture than heathen poetry had dared; in Virgil's company he takes his place without diffidence, and without vain-glory, among the great poets of old—a sister soul.†

Poichè la voce fu restata e queta,
Vidi quattro grand' ombre a noi venire:
Sembianza avean nè trista nè lieta:
* * * *
Così vidi adunar la bella scuola
Di quel signor dell' altissimo canto
Che sovra gli altri come aquila vola.
Da ch' ebber ragionato insieme alquanto
Volsersi a me con salutevol cenno
E 'l mio maestro sorrise di tanto.
E più d' onore ancora assai mi fenno:
Ch' essi mi fecer della loro schiera,
Sì ch' io fui sesto tra cotanto senno.—*Inf.* 4.‡

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* See the grand ending of *Purg.* 27.

Tratto t' ho qui con ingegno e con arte:
Lo tuo piacere omai prendi per duce:
Fuor se' dell' erte vie, fuor se' dell' arte.
Vedi il sole che 'n fronte ti riluce.
Vede l'erbetta, i fiori, e gli arboscelli
Che questa terra sol da se produce.
Mentre che vegnon lieti gli occhi belli
Che lagrimando a te venir mi fenno,
Seder ti puoi e puoi andar tra elli.
Non aspettar mio dir più nè mio cenno:
Libero, dritto, sano è tuo arbitrio,
E fallo fora non fare a suo senno:
Perch' io te sopra te corono e mitrio.

† *Purg.* c. 21.

‡ Ceased had the voice—when in composed array
Four mighty shades approaching I survey'd;—

This sustained magnanimity and lofty self-reliance, which never betrays itself, is one of the main elements in the grandeur of the *Commedia*. It is an imposing spectacle to see such fearlessness, such freedom, and such success in an untried path, amid unprepared materials and rude instruments, models scanty and only half understood, powers of language still doubtful and suspected, the deepest and strongest thought still confined to unbending forms and the harshest phrase; exact and extensive knowledge, as yet far out of reach; with no help from time, which familiarises all things, and of which, manner, elaboration, judgment, and taste are the gifts and inheritance; —to see the poet, trusting to his eye "which saw everything"* and his searching and creative spirit, venture undauntedly into all regions of thought and feeling, to draw thence a picture of the government of the universe.

Nor joy, nor sorrow did their looks betray.
* * * *
Assembled thus, I was offered to my sight
The school of him, the Prince of poetry,
Who, eagle-like, o'er others takes his flight.
When they together had conversed awhile,
They turned to me with salutation bland,
Which from my master drew a friendly smile:
And greater glory still they bade me share,
Making me join their honourable band—
The sixth united to such genius rare.—WRIGHT.

* "Dante che tutto vedea."—*Sacchetti*, Nov. 114.

But such greatness had to endure its price and its counterpoise. Dante was alone:—except in his visionary world, solitary and companionless. The blind Greek had his throng of listeners; the blind Englishman his home and the voices of his daughters; Shakspere had his free associates of the stage; Goethe, his correspondents, a court, and all Germany to applaud. Not so Dante. The friends of his youth are already in the region of spirits, and meet him there—Casella, Forese;—Guido Cavalcanti will soon be with them. In this upper world he thinks and writes as a friendless man—to whom all that he had held dearest was either lost or embittered; he thinks and writes for himself.

And so he is his own law; he owns no tribunal of opinion or standard of taste, except among the great dead. He hears them exhort him to "let the world talk on—to stand like a tower unshaken by the winds."* He fears to be "a timid friend to truth," "—to lose life among those who shall call this present time antiquity."† He belongs to no party. He is

* *Purg.* 5.

† La luce in che rideva il mio tesoro
Ch' io trovai lì, si fe' prima corrusca,
Quale a raggio di sole specchio d'oro;
Indi rispòse: coscienza fusca
O della propria o dell' altrui vergogna
Pur sentirà la tua parola brusca;

his own arbiter of the beautiful and the becoming; his own judge over right and injustice, innocence and guilt. He has no followers to secure, no school to humour, no public to satisfy; nothing to guide him, and nothing to consult, nothing to bind him, nothing to fear, out of himself. In full trust in heart and will, in his sense of truth, in his teeming brain, he gives himself free course. If men have idolised the worthless, and canonised the base, he reverses their award without mercy, and without apology; if they have forgotten the just because he was obscure, he remembers him: if "Monna Berta and Ser Martino,"*

Ma nondimen, rimossa ogni menzogna,
Tutta tua vision fa manifesta,
E lascia pur grattar dov' è la rogna:
Che se la voce tua sarà molesta
Nel primo gusto, vital nutrimento
Lascerà poi quando sarà digesta.
Questo tuo grido farà come vento
Che le più alte cime più percuote:
E ciò non fia d' onor poco argomento.
Però ti son mostrate, in queste ruote,
Nel monte, e nella valle dolorosa,
Pur l' anime che son di fama note.
Che l' animo di quel ch' ode non posa,
Nè ferma fede, per esempio ch' aja
La sua radice incognito e nascosa,
Nè per altro argumento che non paja.—*Parad.* 17.

Non creda Monna Berta e Ser Martino
Per vedere un furare, altro offerere,
Vederli dentro al consiglio divino:
Che quel può surger, e quel può cadere.—*Ibid.* 13.

the wimpled and hooded gossips of the day, with their sage company, have settled it to their own satisfaction that Providence cannot swerve from their general rules, cannot save where they have doomed, or reject where they have approved—he both fears more and hopes more. Deeply reverent to the judgment of the ages past, reverent to the persons whom they have immortalised for good and even for evil, in his own day he cares for no man's person and no man's judgment. And he shrinks not from the auguries and forecastings of his mind about their career and fate. Men reasoned rapidly in those days on such subjects, and without much scruple; but not with such deliberate and discriminating sternness. The most popular and honoured names in Florence,

> Farinata e 'l Tegghiaio, che fur sì degni,
> Jacopo Rusticucci, Arrigo, e 'l Mosca
> E gli altri, ch' a ben far poser gl' ingegni;

have yet the damning brand: no reader of the *Inferno* can have forgotten the shock of that terrible reply to the poet's questionings about their fate:

> Ei son tra le anime più nere.*

If he is partial, it is no vulgar partiality: friendship

* *Inf.* 6.

and old affection do not venture to exempt from its fatal doom the sin of his famous master, Brunetto Latini;* nobleness and great deeds, a kindred character and common wrongs, are not enough to redeem Farinata; and he who could tell her story bowed to the eternal law, and dared not save Francesca. If he condemns by a severer rule than that of the world, he absolves with fuller faith in the possibilities of grace. Many names of whom history has recorded no good, are marked by him for bliss; yet not without full respect for justice. The penitent of the last hour is saved, but he suffers loss. Manfred's soul is rescued; mercy had accepted his tears, and forgiven his great sins; and the excommunication of his enemy did not bar his salvation:

> Per lor maladizion sì non si perde
> Che non possa tornar l' eterno amore
> Mentre che la speranza ha fior del verde.—*Purg.* 3.

Yet his sin, though pardoned, was to keep him for long years from the perfection of heaven.† And with the same independence with which he assigns their fate, he selects his instances—instances which are to

* Che in la mente m' è fitta, ed or m' accuora,
La cara buona imagine paterna.—Inf. 15.

† Charles of Anjou, his Guelf conqueror, is placed above him, in the valley of the kings (*Purg.* 7), "Colui dal maschio naso"—notwithstanding the charges afterwards made against him (*Purg.* 20).

be the types of character and its issues. No man ever owned more unreservedly the fascination of greatness, its sway over the imagination and the heart; no one prized more the grand harmony and sense of fitness which there is, when the great man and the great office are joined in one, and reflect each other's greatness. The famous and great of all ages are gathered in the poet's vision; the great names even of fable—Geryon and the giants, the Minotaur and Centaurs, and the heroes of Thebes and Troy. But not the great and famous only: this is too narrow, too conventional a sphere; it is not real enough. He felt, what the modern world feels so keenly, that wonderful histories are latent in the inconspicuous paths of life, in the fugitive incidents of the hour, among the persons whose faces we have seen. The Church had from the first been witness to the deep interest of individual life. The rising taste for novels showed that society at large was beginning to be alive to it. And it is this feeling—that behind the veil there may be grades of greatness but nothing insignificant—that led Dante to refuse to restrict himself to the characters of fame. He will associate with them the living men who have stood round him; they are part of the same company with the greatest. That they have interested him, touched him, moved his indignation or pity, struck him as examples of great

vicissitude or of a perfect life, have pleased him, loved him—this is enough why they should live in his poem as they have lived to him. He chooses at will; history, if it has been negligent at the time about those whom he thought worthy of renown, must be content with its loss. He tells their story, or touches them with a word like the most familiar names, according as he pleases. The obscure highway robber, the obscure betrayer of his sister's honour—Rinier da Corneto and Rinier Pazzo, and Caccianimico—are ranked, not according to their obscurity, but according to the greatness of their crimes, with the famous conquerors, and "scourges of God," and seducers of the heroic age, Pyrrhus and Attila, and the great Jason of "royal port, who sheds no tear in his torments."* He earns as high praise from Virgil, for his curse on the furious wrath of the old frantic Florentine burgher, as if he had cursed the disturber of the world's peace.† And so in the realms of joy, among the faithful accomplishers of the highest trusts, kings and teachers of the nations, founders of orders, sainted empresses, appear those whom, though the world had forgotten or misread them, the poet had enshrined in his familiar thoughts, for their sweetness, their gentle goodness, their nobility of soul; the

* See the magnificent picture, *Inf.* 18.

† *Ibid.* 8.

penitent, the nun, the old crusading ancestor, the pilgrim who had deserted the greatness which he had created, the brave logician, who "syllogised unpalatable truths" in the Quartier Latin of Paris.*

There is small resemblance in all this — this arbitrary and imperious tone, this range of ideas, feelings, and images, this unshackled freedom, this harsh reality—to the dreamy gentleness of the *Vita Nuova*, or even the staid argumentation of the more mature *Convito*. The *Vita Nuova* is all self-concentration — a brooding, not unpleased, over the varying tides of feeling, which are little influenced by the world without; where every fancy, every sensation, every superstition of the lover is detailed with the most whimsical subtlety. The *Commedia*, too, has its tenderness—and that more deep, more natural, more true, than the poet had before adapted to the traditionary formulæ of the "Courts of Love," —the eyes of Beatrice are as bright, and the "conquering light of her smile;"† they still culminate,

Cunizza, Piccarda, Cacciaguida, Roméo. (*Parad.* 9, 3, 15, 6, 10.)

——La luce eterna di Sigieri
Che leggendo nel vico degli Strami
Sillogizzò invidiosi veri——

in company with S. Thomas Aquinas, in the sphere of the Sun. Ozanam gives a few particulars of this forgotten professor of the "Rue du Fouarre," pp. 320–23.

† Vincendo me col lume d' un sorriso.—*Parad.* 18.

but they are not alone, in the poet's heaven. And the professed subject of the *Commedia* is still Dante's own story and life; he still makes himself the central point. And steeled as he is by that high and hard experience of which his poem is the projection and type—"Ben tetragono ai colpi di ventura"—a stern and brief-spoken man, set on objects, and occupied with a theme, lofty and vast as can occupy man's thoughts, he still lets escape ever and anon some passing avowal of delicate sensitiveness,* lingers for a moment on some indulged self-consciousness, some recollection of his once quick and changeful mood—"io che son trasmutabil per tutte guise"†—or half playfully alludes to the whispered name of a lady,‡

* For instance, his feeling of distress at gazing at the blind, who were not aware of his presence—

> A me pareva andando fare oltraggio
> Vedendo altrui, non essendo veduto:—*Purg.* 13.

and of shame, at being tempted to listen to a quarrel between two lost spirits:

> Ad ascoltarli er' io del tutto fisso,
> Quando 'l Maestro mi disse: or pur mira,
> Che per poco è, che teco non mi risso.
> Quando io 'l sentì' a me parlar con ira
> Volsimi verso lui con tal vergogna,
> Ch' ancor per la memoria mi si gira, &c.—*Inf.* 30.

and the burst,

> O dignitosa coscienza e netta,
> Come t' è picciol fallo amaro morso.—*Purg.* 3.

† *Parad.* 5. ‡ *Purg.* 24.

whose pleasant courtesy has beguiled a few days of exile. But he is no longer spell-bound and entangled in fancies of his own weaving—absorbed in the unprofitable contemplation of his own internal sensations. The man is indeed the same, still a Florentine, still metaphysical, still a lover. He returns to the haunts and images of youth, to take among them his poet's crown; but "with other voice and other garb,"* a penitent and a prophet—with larger thoughts, wider sympathies, freer utterance; sterner and fiercer, yet nobler and more genuine in his tenderness—as one whom trial has made serious, and keen, and intolerant of evil, but not sceptical or callous; yet with the impressions and memories of a very different scene from his old day-dreams.

After that it was the pleasure of the citizens of that fairest and most famous daughter of Rome, Florence, to cast me forth from her most sweet bosom (wherein I had been nourished up to the maturity of my life, and in which, with all peace to her, I long with all my heart to rest my weary soul, and finish the time which is given me), I have passed through almost all the regions to which this language reaches, a wanderer, almost a beggar, displaying, against my will, the stroke of fortune, which is ofttimes unjustly wont to be imputed to the person stricken. Truly, I have been a ship without a sail or helm, carried to divers harbours, and gulfs, and shores, by that parching wind which sad poverty breathes; and I have seemed vile in the eyes of many, who perchance, from some fame, had imagined of me

* *Parad.* 25.

in another form; in the sight of whom not only did my presence become nought, but every work of mine less prized, both what had been and what was to be wrought.—*Convito*, Tr. i. c. 3.

Thus proved, and thus furnished—thus independent and confident, daring to trust his instinct and genius in what was entirely untried and unusual, he entered on his great poem, to shadow forth, under the figure of his own conversion and purification, not merely how a single soul rises to its perfection, but how this visible world, in all its phases of nature, life, and society, is one with the invisible, which borders on it, actuates, accomplishes, and explains it. It is this vast plan—to take into his scope, not the soul only in its struggles and triumph, but all that the soul finds itself engaged with in its course; the accidents of the hour, and of ages past; the real persons, great and small, apart from and without whom it cannot think or act; the material world, its theatre and home—it is this which gives so many various sides to the *Commedia*, which makes it so novel and strange. It is not a mere personal history, or a pouring forth of feeling, like the *Vita Nuova*, though he is himself the mysterious voyager, and he opens without reserve his actual life and his heart; he speaks, indeed, in the first person, yet he is but a character of the drama, and in great part of it with not more of distinct personality than in that paraphrase of the penitential

Psalms, in which he has preluded so much of the *Commedia*. Yet the *Commedia* is not a pure allegory; it admits, and makes use of the allegorical, but the laws of allegory are too narrow for it; the real in it is too impatient of the veil, and breaks through in all its hardness and detail, into what is most shadowy. History is indeed viewed not in its ephemeral look, but under the light of God's final judgments; in its completion, not in its provisional and fragmentary character; viewed therefore but in faith;—but its issues, which in this confused scene we ordinarily contemplate in the gross, the poet brings down to detail and individuals; he faces and grasps the tremendous thought that the very men and women whom we see and speak to, are now the real representatives of sin and goodness, the true actors in that scene which is so familiar to us as a picture—unflinching and terrible heart, he endures to face it in its most harrowing forms. But he wrote not for sport, nor to give poetic pleasure; he wrote to warn; the seed of the *Commedia* was sown in tears, and reaped in misery: and the consolations which it offers are awful as they are real.

Thus, though he throws into symbol and image, what can only be expressed by symbol and image, we can as little forget in reading him this real world in which we live, as we can in one of Shakspere's

plays. It is not merely that the poem is crowded with real personages, most of them having the single interest to us of being real. But all that is associated with man's history and existence is interwoven with the main course of thought—all that gives character to life, all that gives it form and feature, even to quaintness, all that occupies the mind, or employs the hand—speculation, science, arts, manufactures, monuments, scenes, customs, proverbs, ceremonies, games, punishments, attitudes of men, habits of living creatures. The wildest and most unearthly imaginations, the most abstruse thoughts take up into, and incorporate with themselves the forcible and familiar impressions of our mother earth, and do not refuse the company and aid even of the homeliest.

This is not mere poetic ornament, peculiarly, profusely, or extravagantly employed. It is one of the ways in which his dominant feeling expresses itself—spontaneous and instinctive in each several instance of it, but the kindling and effluence of deliberate thought, and attending on a clear purpose—the feeling of the real and intimate connexion between the objects of sight and faith. It is not that he sees in one the simple counterpart and reverse of the other, or sets himself to trace out universally their mutual correspondences; he has too strong a sense of the reality of this familiar life to reduce it merely to

a shadow and type of the unseen. What he struggles to express in countless ways, with all the resources of his strange and gigantic power, is that this world and the next are both equally real, and both one—parts, however different, of one whole. The world to come we know but in "a glass darkly;" man can only think and imagine of it in images, which he knows to be but broken and faint reflections: but this world we know, not in outline, and featureless idea, but by name, and face, and shape, by place and person, by the colours and forms which crowd over its surface, the men who people its habitations, the events which mark its moments. Detail fills the sense here, and is the mark of reality. And thus he seeks to keep alive the feeling of what that world is which he connects with heaven and hell; not by abstractions, not much by elaborate and highly-finished pictures, but by names, persons, local features, definite images. Widely and keenly has he ranged over and searched into the world—with a largeness of mind which disdained not to mark and treasure up, along with much unheeded beauty, many a characteristic feature of nature, unnoticed because so common. All his pursuits and interests contribute to the impression, which, often instinctively it may be, he strives to produce, of the manifold variety of our life. As a man of society, his memory is full of its usages, formalities, graces, follies,

fashions—of expressive motions, postures, gestures, looks—of music, of handicrafts, of the conversation of friends or associates—of all that passes, so transient, yet so keenly pleasant or distasteful, between man and man. As a traveller, he recalls continually the names and scenes of the world;—as a man of speculation, the secrets of nature—the phenomena of light, the theory of the planets' motions, the idea and laws of physiology. As a man of learning, he is filled with the thoughts and recollections of ancient fable and history; as a politician, with the thoughts, prognostications, and hopes, of the history of the day; as a moral philosopher he has watched himself, his external sensations and changes, his inward passions, his mental powers, his ideas, his conscience; he has far and wide noted character, discriminated motives, classed good and evil deeds. All that the man of society, of travel, of science, of learning, the politician, the moralist, could gather, is used at will in the great poetic structure; but all converges to the purpose, and is directed by the intense feeling of the theologian, who sees this wonderful and familiar scene melting into, and ending in another yet more wonderful, but which will one day be as familiar—who sees the difficult but sure progress of the manifold remedies of the Divine government to their predestined issue; and, over all, God and His saints.

So comprehensive in interest is the *Commedia*. Any attempt to explain it, by narrowing that interest to politics, philosophy, the moral life, or theology itself, must prove inadequate. Theology strikes the key-note; but history, natural and metaphysical science, poetry, and art, each in their turn join in the harmony, independent, yet ministering to the whole. If from the poem itself we could be for a single moment in doubt of the reality and dominant place of religion in it, the plain-spoken prose of the *Convito* would show how he placed "the Divine Science, full of all peace, and allowing no strife of opinions and sophisms, for the excellent certainty of its subject, which is God," in single perfection above all other sciences, "which are, as Solomon speaks, but queens, or concubines, or maidens; but she is the 'Dove,' and the 'perfect one'—'Dove,' because without stain of strife—'perfect,' because perfectly she makes us behold the truth, in which our soul stills itself and is at rest." But the same passage * shows likewise how he viewed all human knowledge and human interests, as holding their due place in the hierarchy of wisdom, and among the steps of man's perfection. No account of the *Commedia* will prove sufficient, which does not keep in view, first of all, the high moral purpose and

* *Convito*, Tr. 2, c. 14, 15.

deep spirit of faith with which it was written, and then the wide liberty of materials and means which the poet allowed himself in working out his design.

Doubtless, his writings have a political aspect. The "great Ghibelline poet" is one of Dante's received synonymes; of his strong political opinions, and the importance he attached to them, there can be no doubt. And he meant his poem to be the vehicle of them, and the record to all ages of the folly and selfishness with which he saw men governed. That he should take the deepest interest in the goings on of his time, is part of his greatness; to suppose that he stopped at them, or that he subordinated to political objects or feelings all the other elements of his poem, is to shrink up that greatness into very narrow limits. Yet this has been done by men of mark and ability, by Italians, by men who read the *Commedia* in their own mother-tongue. It has been maintained as a satisfactory account of it—maintained with great labour and pertinacious ingenuity—that Dante meant nothing more by his poem than the conflicts and ideal triumph of a political party. The hundred cantos of that vision of the universe are but a manifesto of the Ghibelline propaganda, designed, under the veil of historic images and scenes, to insinuate what it was dangerous to announce; and Beatrice, in all her glory and sweetness, is but a

specimen of the jargon, cant, and slang of Ghibelline freemasonry. When Italians write thus, they degrade the greatest name of their country to a depth of laborious imbecility, to which the trifling of schoolmen and academicians is as nothing. It is to solve the enigma of Dante's works, by imagining for him a character in which it is hard to say which predominates, the pedant, mountebank, or infidel. After that we may read Voltaire's sneers with patience, and even enter with gravity on the examination of Father Hardouin's Historic Doubts. The fanaticism of an outraged liberalism, produced by centuries of injustice and despotism, is but a poor excuse for such perverse blindness.*

Dante was not a Ghibelline, though he longed for the interposition of an Imperial power. Historically he did not belong to the Ghibelline party. It is true that he forsook the Guelfs, with whom he had been brought up, and that the White Guelfs, with whom he was expelled from Florence, were at length merged and lost in the Ghibelline party†; and he acted with them for a time.‡ But no words can be stronger

* In the *Remains of Arthur Henry Hallam* is a paper, in which he examines and disposes of this theory with a courteous and forbearing irony, which would have deepened probably into something more, on thinking over it a second time.

† *Dino Comp.* pp. 89–91.

‡ His name appears among the White delegates in 1307. Pelli, p. 117.

than those in which he disjoins himself from that "evil and foolish company," and claims his independence—

A te fia bello
*Averti fatto parte per te stesso.**

And it is not easy to conceive a Ghibelline partisan putting into the mouth of Justinian, the type of law and empire, a general condemnation of his party as heavy as that of their antagonists;—the crime of having betrayed, as the Guelfs had resisted, the great symbol of public right—

Omai puoi giudicar di que' cotali
Ch' io accusai di sopra, e de' lor falli
Che son cagion di tutti i vostri mali.
L' uno al pubblico segno i gigli gialli
Oppone, e *quel s' appropria l'altro a parte,*
Sì ch' è forte a veder qual più si falli.
Faccian li Ghibellin, faccian lor arte
Sott' altro segno; che mal segue quello
Sempre chi la giustizia e lui diparte.†

And though, as the victim of the Guelfs of Florence, he found refuge among Ghibelline princes, he had friends among Guelfs also. His steps and his tongue were free to the end. And in character and feeling, in his austerity, his sturdiness and roughness, his intolerance of corruption and pride, his strongly-

* *Parad.* 17. † *Ibid.* 6.

marked devotional temper, he was much less a Ghibelline than like one of those stern Guelfs who hailed Savonarola.

But he had a very decided and complete political theory, which certainly was not Guelf; and, as parties then were, it was not much more Ghibelline. Most assuredly no set of men would have more vigorously resisted the attempt to realise his theory, would have joined more heartily with all immediate opponents —Guelfs, Black, White, and Green, or even Boniface VIII.,—to keep out such an emperor as Dante imagined, than the Ghibelline nobles and potentates.

Dante's political views were a dream; though a dream based on what had been, and an anticipation of what was, in part at least, to come. It was a dream in the middle ages, in divided and republican Italy, the Italy of cities—of a real and national government, based on justice and law. It was the dream of a real *state*. He imagined that the Roman empire had been one great state; he persuaded himself that Christendom might be such. He was wrong in both instances; but in this case, as in so many others, he had already caught the spirit and ideas of a far-distant future; and the political organisation of modern times, so familiar to us that we cease to think of its exceeding wonder, is the practical confirmation, though in a form very different from what he imagined, of the

depth and farsightedness of those expectations which are in outward form so chimerical—"*i miei non falsi errori.*"

He had studied the "infinite disorders of the world" in one of their most unrestrained scenes, the streets of an Italian republic. Law was powerless, good men were powerless, good intentions came to naught; neither social habits nor public power could resist, when selfishness chose to have its way. The Church was indeed still the salt of the nations; but it had once dared and achieved more; it had once been the only power which ruled them. And this it could do no longer. If strength and energy had been enough to make the Church's influence felt on government, there was a Pope who could have done it—a man who was undoubtedly the most wondered at and admired of his age, whom friend or foe never characterised, without adding the invariable epithet of his greatness of soul—the "*magnanimus peccator*,"* whose Roman grandeur in meeting his unworthy fate fascinated into momentary sympathy even Dante.† But

* Benvenuto da Imola.

† Veggio in Alagna entrar lo fiordaliso,
E nel vicario suo Cristo esser catto;
Veggiolo un' altra volta esser deriso;
Veggio rinnovellar l'aceto e 'l fele,
E tra vivi ladroni essere anciso.—*Purg.* 20.

G. Villani, viii. 63. Come magnanimo e valente, disse, *Dacchè per*

among the things which Boniface VIII. could not do, even if he cared about it, was the maintaining peace and law in Italian towns. And while this great political power was failing, its correlative and antagonist was paralysed also. "Since the death of Frederic II.," says Dante's contemporary, "the fame and recollections of the empire were well-nigh extinguished."* Italy was left without government —"come nave senza nocchiero in gran tempesta"—to the mercies of her tyrants :

> Che le terre d'Italia tutte piene
> Son di tiranni, e un Marcel diventa
> Ogni villan, che parteggiando viene.—*Purg.* 6.

In this scene of violence and disorder, with the Papacy gone astray, the empire debased and impotent, the religious orders corrupted, power meaning lawlessness, the well-disposed become weak and cowardly, religion neither guide nor check to society, but only the consolation of its victims—Dante was bold and hopeful enough to believe in the Divine appointment, and in the possibility, of law and government—of a state. In his philosophy, the institutions which provide

tradimento, come Gesù Cristo, voglio esser preso e mi conviene morire, almeno voglio morire come Papa; e di presente si fece parare dell' ammanto di S. Piero, e colla corona di Constantino in capo, e colle chiavi e croce in mano, e in su la sedia papale si pose a sedere, e giunto a lui Sciarra e gli altri suoi nimici, con villane parole lo scherniro.

* *Dino Compagni*, p. 135.

for man's peace and liberty in this life are part of God's great order for raising men to perfection;—not indispensable, yet ordinary parts; having their important place, though but for the present time; and though imperfect, real instruments of His moral government. He could not believe it to be the intention of Providence, that on the introduction of higher hopes and the foundation of a higher society, civil society should collapse and be left to ruin, as henceforth useless or prejudicial in man's trial and training; that the significant intimations of nature, that law and its results, justice, peace, and stability, ought to be and might be realised among men, had lost their meaning and faded away before the announcement of a kingdom not of this world. And if the perfection of civil society had not been superseded by the Church, it had become clear, if events were to be read as signs, that she was not intended to supply its political offices and functions. She had taught, elevated, solaced, blessed, not only individual souls, but society; she had for a time even governed it: but though her other powers remained, she could govern it no longer. Failure had made it certain that, in his strong and quaint language, "*Virtus authorizandi regnum nostræ mortalitatis est contra naturam ecclesiæ; ergo non est de numero virtutum suarum.*"* Another and distinct organisation was

* *De Monarch.* lib. iii. p. 188, Ed. Fraticelli.

required for this, unless the temporal order was no longer worthy the attention of Christians.

This is the idea of the *De Monarchia*; and though it holds but a place in the great scheme of the *Commedia*, it is prominent there also—an idea seen but in a fantastic shape, encumbered and confused with most grotesque imagery, but the real idea of polity and law, which the experience of modern Europe has attained to.

He found in clear outline in the Greek philosophy, the theory of merely human society; and raising its end and purpose, "*finem totius humanæ civilitatis*," to a height and dignity which Heathens could not forecast, he adopted it in its more abstract and ideal form. He imagined a single authority, unselfish, inflexible, irresistible, which could make all smaller tyrannies to cease, and enable every man to live in peace and liberty, so that he lived in justice. It is simply what each separate state of Christendom has by this time more or less perfectly achieved. The theoriser of the middle ages could conceive of its accomplishment only in one form, as grand as it was impossible—a universal monarchy.

But he did not start from an abstraction. He believed that history attested the existence of such a monarchy. The prestige of the Roman empire was then strong. Europe still lingers on the idea, and

cannot even yet bring itself to give up its part in that great monument of human power. But in the middle ages the Empire was still believed to exist. It was the last greatness which had been seen in the world, and the world would not believe that it was over. Above all, in Italy, a continuity of lineage, of language, of local names, and in part of civilisation and law, forbad the thought that the great Roman people had ceased to be. Florentines and Venetians boasted that they were Romans: the legends which the Florentine ladies told to their maidens at the loom were tales of their mother city, Rome. The Roman element, little understood, but profoundly reverenced and dearly cherished, was dominant; the conductor of civilisation, and enfolding the inheritance of all the wisdom, experience, feeling, art, of the past, it elevated, even while it overawed, oppressed, and enslaved. A deep belief in Providence added to the intrinsic grandeur of the empire a sacred character. The flight of the eagle has been often told and often sung; but neither in Livy or Virgil, Gibbon or Bossuet, with intenser sympathy or more kindred power, than in those rushing and unflagging verses in which the middle-age poet hears the imperial legislator relate the fated course of the "sacred sign," from the day when Pallas died for it, till it accomplished the vengeance of heaven in Judæa, and

afterwards, under Charlemagne, smote down the enemies of the Church.*

The following passage, from the *De Monarchia*, will show the poet's view of the Roman empire, and its office in the world:

To the reasons above alleged, a memorable experience brings confirmation: I mean that state of mankind which the Son of God, when He would for man's salvation take man upon Him, either waited for, or ordered when so He willed. For if from the fall of our first parents, which was the starting-point of all our wanderings, we retrace the various dispositions of men and their times, we shall not find at any time, except under the divine monarch Augustus, when a perfect monarchy existed, that the world was everywhere quiet. And that then mankind was happy in the tranquillity of universal peace, this all writers of history, this famous poets, this even the Scribe of the meekness of Christ has deigned to attest. And lastly, Paul has called that most blessed condition, the fulness of time. Truly time, and the things of time, were full, for no mystery of our felicity then lacked its minister. But how the world has gone on from the time when that seamless robe was first torn by the claws of covetousness, we may read, and would that we might not also see. O race of men, by how great storms and losses, by how great shipwrecks hast thou of necessity been vexed since, transformed into a beast of many heads, thou hast been struggling different ways, sick in understanding, equally sick in heart. The higher intellect, with its invincible reasons, thou reckest not of; nor of the inferior, with its eye of experience; nor of affection, with the sweetness of divine suasion, when the trumpet of the Holy Ghost sounds to thee—"Behold, how good is it, and how pleasant, brethren, to dwell together in unity."—*De Monarch.* lib. i. p. 54.

* *Parad.* c. 6.

Yet this great Roman empire existed still unimpaired in name—not unimposing even in what really remained of it. Dante, to supply a want, turned it into a theory—a theory easy to smile at now, but which contained and was a beginning of unknown or unheeded truth. What he yearns after is the predominance of the principle of justice in civil society. That, if it is still imperfect, is no longer a dream in our day; but experience had never realised it to him, and he takes refuge in tentative and groping theory. The divinations of the greatest men have been vague and strange, and none have been stranger than those of the author of the *De Monarchia.* The second book, in which he establishes the title of the Roman people to Universal Empire, is as startling a piece of mediæval argument as it would be easy to find.

As when we cannot attain to look upon a cause, we commonly wonder at a new effect, so when we know the cause, we look down with a certain derision on those who remain in wonder. And I indeed wondered once how the Roman people had, without any resistance, been set over the world; and looking at it superficially, I thought that they had obtained this by no right, but by mere force of arms. But when I fixed deeply the eyes of my mind on it, and by most effectual signs knew that Divine Providence had wrought this, wonder departed, and a certain scornful contempt came in its stead, when I perceived the nations raging against the pre-eminence of the Roman people:—when I see the people imagining a vain thing, as I once used to do; when, moreover, I grieve over kings and princes agreeing in this only, to be against their Lord and his

anointed Roman Emperor. Wherefore in derision, not without a certain grief, I can cry out, for that glorious people and for Cæsar, with him who cried in behalf of the Prince of Heaven, "Why did the nations rage, and the people imagine vain things; the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were joined in one against the Lord and his anointed." But (because natural love suffers not derision to be of long duration, but, like the summer sun, which, scattering the morning mists, irradiates the east with light, so prefers to pour forth the light of correction) therefore to break the bonds of the ignorance of such kings and rulers, to show that the human race is free from *their* yoke, I will exhort myself, in company with the most holy Prophet, taking up his following words, "Let us break their bonds, and cast away from us their yoke."—*De Monarch.* lib. ii. p. 58.

And to prove this pre-eminence of right in the Roman people, and their heirs, the Emperors of Christendom, he appeals not merely to the course of Providence, to their high and noble ancestry, to the blessings of their just and considerate laws, to their unselfish guardianship of the world — "*Romanum imperium de fonte nascitur pietatis;*" — not merely to their noble examples of private virtue, self-devotion, and public spirit—"those most sacred victims of the Decian house, who laid down their lives for the public weal, as Livy—not as *they* deserved, but as *he* was able—tells to their glory; and that unspeakable sacrifice of freedom's sternest guardians, the Catos;" not merely to the "judgment of God" in that great duel and wager of battle for empire, in which heaven declared against all other champions and "co-athletes"

—Alexander, Pyrrhus, Hannibal, and by all the formalities of judicial combat awarded the great prize to those who fought, not for love or hatred, but justice —"*Quis igitur nunc adeo obtusæ mentis est, qui non videat, sub jure duelli gloriosum populum coronam totius orbis esse lucratum?*" — not merely to arguments derived "from the principles of the Christian faith"— but to *miracles.* "The Roman empire," he says, "was, in order to its perfections, aided by the help of miracles; therefore it was willed by God; and, by consequence, both was, and is, of right." And these miracles, "proved by the testimony of illustrious authorities," are the prodigies of Livy—the ancile of Numa, the geese of the Capitol, the escape of Clelia, the hail-storm which checked Hannibal.*

The intellectual phenomenon is a strange one. It would be less strange if Dante were arguing in the schools, or pleading for a party. But even Henry of Luxemburg cared little for such a throne as the poet wanted him to fill, much less Can Grande and the Visconti. The idea, the theory, and the argument, are of the writer's own solitary meditation. We may wonder. But there are few things more strange than the history of argument. How often has a cause or an idea turned out, in the eyes of posterity, so much

* *De Monarch.* lib. ii. pp. 62, 66, 78, 82, 84, 108–114, 116, 72–76.

better than its arguments. How often have we seen argument getting as it were into a groove, and unable to extricate itself, so as to do itself justice. The every-day cases of private experience, of men defending right conclusions on wrong or conventional grounds, or in a confused form, entangled with conclusions of a like yet different nature;—of arguments, theories, solutions, which once satisfied, satisfying us no longer on a question about which we hold the same belief—of one party unable to comprehend the arguments of another—of one section of the same side smiling at the defence of their common cause by another—are all reproduced on a grander scale in the history of society. There too, one age cannot comprehend another; there too it takes time to disengage, subordinate, eliminate. Truth of this sort is not the elaboration of one keen or strong mind, but of the secret experience of many; "*nihil sine ætate est, omnia tempus expectant.*" But a counterpart to the *De Monarchia* is not wanting in our own day; theory has not ceased to be mighty. In warmth and earnestness, in sense of historic grandeur, in its support of a great cause and a great idea, not less than in the thought of its motto, εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω, De Maistre's volume *Du Pape*, recalls the antagonist *De Monarchia*; but it recalls it not less in its bold dealing with facts, and its bold assumption of principles, though the knowledge and debates

of five more busy centuries, and the experience of modern courts and revolutions, might have guarded the Piedmontese nobleman from the mistakes of the old Florentine.

But the idea of the *De Monarchia* is no key to the *Commedia.* The direct and primary purpose of the *Commedia* is surely its obvious one. It is to stamp a deep impression on the mind, of the issues of good and ill doing here—of the real worlds of pain and joy. To do this forcibly, it is done in detail—of course it can only be done in figure. Punishment, purification, or the fulness of consolation are, as he would think, at this very moment, the lot of all the numberless spirits who have ever lived here — spirits still living and sentient as himself: parallel with our life, they too are suffering or are at rest. Without pause or interval, in all its parts simultaneously, this awful scene is going on—the judgments of God are being fulfilled—could we but see it. It exists, it might be seen, at each instant of time, by a soul whose eyes were opened, which was carried through it. And this he imagines. It had been imagined before; it is the working out, which is peculiar to him. It is not a barren vision. His subject is, besides the eternal world, the soul which contemplates it; by sight, according to his figures—in reality, by faith. As he is led on from woe to deeper woe, then through the tempered chas-

tisements and resignation of Purgatory to the beatific vision, he is tracing the course of the soul on earth, realising sin and weaning itself from it—of its purification and preparation for its high lot, by converse with the good and wise, by the remedies of grace, by efforts of will and love, perhaps by the dominant guidance of some single pure and holy influence, whether of person, or institution, or thought. Nor will we say but that beyond this earthly probation, he is not also striving to grasp and imagine to himself something of that awful process and training, by which, whether in or out of the flesh, the spirit is made fit to meet its Maker, its Judge, and its Chief Good.

Thus it seems that even in its main design, the poem has more than one aspect; it is a picture, a figure, partially a history, perhaps an anticipation. And this is confirmed, by what the poet has himself distinctly stated, of his ideas of poetic composition. His view is expressed generally in his philosophical treatise, the *Convito*; but it is applied directly to the *Commedia*, in a letter, which, if in its present form, of doubtful authenticity, without any question represents his sentiments, and the substance of which is incorporated in one of the earliest writings on the poem, Boccaccio's commentary. The following is his account of the subject of the poem:

For the evidence of what is to be said, it is to be noted, that this work is not of one single meaning only, but may be said to

have many meanings ("*polysensuum*"). For the first meaning is that of the letter—another is that of things signified by the letter; the first of these is called the literal sense, the second, the allegorical or moral. This mode of treating a subject may for clearness' sake be considered in those verses of the Psalm, "*In exitu Israel.*" "When Israel came out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from the strange people, Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion." For if we look at the *letter* only, there is here signified, the going out of the children of Israel in the time of Moses—if at the *allegory* there is signified our redemption through Christ—if at the *moral* sense there is signified to us the conversion of the soul from the mourning and misery of sin to the state of grace—if at the *anagogic* sense,* there is signified the passing out of the holy soul from the bondage of this corruption to the liberty of everlasting glory. And these mystical meanings, though called by different names, may all be called *allegorical* as distinguished from the literal or historical sense. . . . . This being considered, it is plain that there ought to be a twofold subject, concerning which the two corresponding meanings may proceed. Therefore we must consider first concerning the subject of this work as it is to be understood literally, then as it is to be considered allegorically. The subject then of the whole work, taken literally only, is the state of souls after death considered in itself. For about this, and on this, the whole work turns. But if the work be taken allegorically, its subject is man, as, by his freedom of choice deserving well or ill, he is subject to the justice which rewards and punishes.†

The passage in the *Convito* is to the same effect; but his remarks on the *moral* and *anagogic* meaning may be quoted:

The third sense is called *moral*; that it is which readers

* *Litera* gesta refert, quid credas *allegoria*,
Moralis quid agas, quid speres *anagogia*.
De Witte's note from *Buti*.

† Ep. ad *Kan Grand.* § 6, 7.

ought to go on noting carefully in writings, for their own profit and that of their disciples: as in the Gospel it may be noted, when Christ went up to the mountain to be transfigured, that of the twelve Apostles, he took with him only three; in which morally we may understand, that in the most secret things we ought to have but few companions. The fourth sort of meaning is called *anagogic*, that is, above our sense; and this is when we spiritually interpret a passage, which even in its literal meaning, by means of the things signified, expresses the heavenly things of everlasting glory: as may be seen in that song of the Prophet, which says, that in the coming out of the people of Israel from Egypt, Judah was made holy and free; which although it is manifestly true according to the letter, is not less true as spiritually understood; that is, that when the soul comes out of sin, it is made holy and free, in its own power.*

With this passage before us there can be no doubt of the meaning, however veiled, of those beautiful lines, already referred to, in which Virgil, after having conducted the poet up the steeps of Purgatory, where his sins have been one by one cancelled by the ministering angels, finally takes leave of him, and bids him wait for Beatrice, on the skirts of the earthly Paradise:

Come la scala tutta sotto noi
Fu corsa e fummo in sù 'l grado superno,
In me ficcò Virgilio gli occhi suoi,
E disse: "Il temporal fuoco, e l' eterno
Veduto hai, figlio, e se' venuto in parte
Ov' io per me più oltre non discerno.
Tratto t' ho qui con ingegno e con arte:
Lo tuo piacere omai prendi per duce;

* *Convito*, Tr. 2, c. 1.

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Fuor se' dell' erte vie, fuor se' dell' arte.
Vedi il sole che 'n fronte ti riluce :
Vedi l' erbetta, i fiori, e gli arboscelli
Che quella terra sol da se produce.
Mentre che vegnon lieti gli occhi belli
Che lagrimando a te venir mi fenno,
Seder ti puoi e puoi andar tra elli.
Non aspettar mio dir più nè mio cenno :
Libero, dritto, sano è tuo arbitrio,
E fallo fora non fare a suo senno :—
Perch' io te sopra te corono e mitrio." *

The general meaning of the *Commedia* is clear enough. But it certainly does appear to refuse to be

* When we had run
O'er all the ladder to its topmost round,
As there we stood, on me the Mantuan fix'd
His eyes, and thus he spake : "Both fires, my son,
The temporal and the eternal, thou hast seen :
And art arrived, where of itself my ken
No further reaches. I with skill and art,
Thus far have drawn thee. Now thy pleasure take
For guide. Thou hast o'ercome the steeper way,
O'ercome the straiter. Lo ! the sun, that darts
His beam upon thy forehead : lo ! the herb,
The arborets and flowers, which of itself
This land pours forth profuse. Till those bright eyes
With gladness come, which, weeping, made me haste
To succour thee, thou mayest or seat thee down,
Or wander where thou wilt. Expect no more
Sanction of warning voice or sign from me,
Free of thine own arbitrement to choose,
Discreet, judicious. To distrust thy sense
Were henceforth error. I invest thee then
With crown and mitre, sovereign o'er thyself."
Purg. c. 27.—CARY.

fitted into a connected formal scheme of interpretation. It is not a homogeneous, consistent allegory, like the *Pilgrim's Progress* and the *Fairy Queen*. The allegory continually breaks off, shifts its ground, gives place to other elements, or mingles with them—like a stream which suddenly sinks into the earth, and after passing under plains and mountains, reappears in a distant point, and in different scenery. We can, indeed, imagine its strange author commenting on it, and finding or marking out its prosaic substratum, with the cold-blooded precision and scholastic distinctions of the *Convito*. However, he has not done so. And of the many enigmas which present themselves, either in its structure or separate parts, the key seems hopelessly lost. The early commentators are very ingenious, but very unsatisfactory; they see where we can see, but beyond that they are as full of uncertainty as ourselves. It is in character with that solitary and haughty spirit, while touching universal sympathies, appalling and charming all hearts, to have delighted in his own dark sayings, which had meaning only to himself. It is true that, whether in irony, or from that quaint studious care for the appearance of literal truth, which makes him apologise for the wonders which he relates, and confirm them by an oath, "on the words of his

poem,"* he provokes and challenges us; bids us admire "doctrine hidden under strange verses;"† bids us strain our eyes, for the veil is thin:

> Aguzza, qui, lettor, ben l' occhi al vero:
> Che il velo è ora ben tanto sottile,
> Certo, che il trapassar dentro è leggiero.—*Purg.* c. 8.

But eyes are still strained in conjecture and doubt.

Yet the most certain and detailed commentary, one which assigned the exact reason for every image or allegory, and its place and connexion in a general scheme, would add but little to the charm or to the use of the poem. It is not so obscure but that every man's experience who has thought over and felt the mystery of our present life, may supply the commentary — the more ample, the wider and more various has been his experience, the deeper and keener his feeling. Details and links of connexion may be matter of controversy. Whether the three beasts of the forest mean definitely the vices of the time, or of Florence specially, or of the poet himself —"the wickedness of his heels, compassing him round

* Sempre a quel ver, ch' ha faccia di menzogna,
De' l' uom chiuder le labbra, quanto puote,
Però che senza colpa fa vergogna.
Ma qui tacer nol posso; e per le note
Di questa *Commedia*, lettor, ti giuro
S' elle non sien di lunga grazia vote, &c.—*Inf.* 16.

† *Inf.* 9.

about"—may still exercise critics and antiquaries; but that they carry with them distinct and special impressions of evil, and that they are the hindrances of man's salvation, is not doubtful. And our knowledge of the key of the allegory, where we possess it, contributes but little to the effect. We may infer from the *Convito** that the eyes of Beatrice stand definitely for the *demonstrations*, and her smiles for the *persuasions* of wisdom; but the poetry of the Paradiso is not about demonstrations and persuasions, but about looks and smiles; and the ineffable and holy calm—"*serenitatis et æternitatis afflatus*"—which pervades it, comes from the sacred truths, and holy persons, and that deep spirit of high-raised yet composed devotion, which it requires no interpreter to show us.

Figure and symbol, then, are doubtless the law of composition in the *Commedia*; but this law discloses itself very variously, and with different degrees of strictness. In its primary and most general form, it is palpable, consistent, pervading. There can be no doubt that the poem is meant to be understood figuratively—no doubt of what in general it is meant to shadow forth—no doubt as to the general meaning of its parts, their connexion with each other. But in its secondary and subordinate applications, the law

* *Convito*, Tr. 3, c. 15.

works—to our eye at least—irregularly, unequally, and fitfully. There can be no question that Virgil, the poet's guide, represents the purely human element in the training of the soul and of society, as Beatrice does the divine. But neither represent the whole; he does not sum up all appliances of wisdom in Virgil, nor all teachings and influences of grace in Beatrice; these have their separate figures. And both represent successively several distinct forms of their general antitypes. They have various degrees of abstractness, and narrow down, according to that order of things to which they refer and correspond, into the special and the personal. In the general economy of the poem, Virgil stands for human wisdom in its widest sense; but he also stands for it in its various shapes, in the different parts. He is the type of human philosophy and science.* He is, again, more definitely, that spirit of imagination and poetry, which opens men's eyes to the glory of the visible, and the truth of the invisible; and to Italians, he is a definite embodiment of it, their own great poet, "*vates, poeta noster.*"† In the Christian order, he is human wisdom, dimly mindful of its heavenly origin—presaging dimly its return to God—sheltering in heathen

* "O tu ch' onori ogni scienza ed arte."—*Inf.* 4. "Quel savio gentil che tutto seppe."—*Inf.* 7. "Il mar di tutto 'l senno."—*Inf.* 8.

† *De Monarchia.*

times that "vague and unconnected family of religious truths, originally from God, but sojourning without the sanction of miracle or visible home, as pilgrims up and down the world."* In the political order, he is the guide of law-givers, wisdom fashioning the impulses and instincts of men into the harmony of society, contriving stability and peace, guarding justice; fit part for the poet to fill, who had sung the origin of Romĕ, and the justice and peace of Augustus. In the order of individual life, and the progress of the individual soul, he is the human conscience witnessing to duty, its discipline and its hopes, and with yet more certain and fearful presage, to its vindication; the human conscience seeing and acknowledging the law, but unable to confer power to fulfil it—wakened by grace from among the dead, leading the living man up to it, and waiting for its light and strength. But he is more than a figure. To the poet himself, who blends with his high argument his whole life, Virgil had been the utmost that mind can be to mind—teacher, quickener and revealer of power, source of thought, exemplar and model, never disappointing, never attained to, observed with "long study and great love:"

Tu duca, tu signor, e tu maestro.—*Inf.* 2.

* Newman's *Arians.*

And towards this great master, the poet's whole soul is poured forth in reverence and affection. To Dante he is no figure, but a person—with feelings and weaknesses—overcome by the vexation, kindling into the wrath, carried away by the tenderness, of the moment. He reads his scholar's heart, takes him by the hand in danger, carries him in his arms and in his bosom, "like a son more than a companion," rebukes his unworthy curiosity, kisses him when he shows a noble spirit, asks pardon for his own mistakes. Never were the kind, yet severe ways of a master, on the disciple's diffidence and open-heartedness, drawn with greater force, or less effort; and he seems to have been reflecting on his own affection to Virgil, when he makes Statius forget that they were both but shades:

> Or puoi la quantitate
> Comprender dell' amor ch' a te mi scalda,
> Quando *dismento la nostra vanitate*
> *Trattando l' ombre come cosa salda.*—*Purg.* 21.

And so with the poet's second guide. The great idea which Beatrice figures, though always present, is seldom rendered artificially prominent, and is often entirely hidden beneath the rush of real recollections, and the creations of dramatic power. Abstractions venture and trust themselves among realities, and for the time are forgotten. A name, a real person, a

historic passage, a lament or denunciation, a tragedy of actual life, a legend of classic times, the fortunes of friends—the story of Francesca or Ugolino, the fate of Buonconte's corpse, the apology of Pier delle Vigne, the epitaph of Madonna Pia, Ulysses' western voyage, the march of Roman history—appear and absorb for themselves all interest: or else it is a philosophical speculation, or a theory of morality, or a case of conscience—not indeed alien from the main subject, yet independent of the allegory, and not translateable into any new meaning—standing on their own ground, worked out each according to its own law; but they do not disturb the main course of the poet's thought, who grasps and paints each detail of human life in its own peculiarity, while he sees in each a significance and interest beyond itself. He does not stop in each case to tell us so, but he makes it felt. The tale ends, the individual disappears, and the great allegory resumes its course. It is like one of those great musical compositions which alone seem capable of adequately expressing, in a limited time, a course of unfolding and change, in an idea, a career, a life, a society—where one great thought predominates, recurs, gives colour and meaning, and forms the unity of the whole, yet passes through many shades and transitions; is at one time definite, at another suggestive and mysterious; incorporating and giving free place

and play to airs and melodies even of an alien cast; striking off abruptly from its expected road, but without ever losing itself, without breaking its true continuity, or failing of its completeness.

This then seems to us the end and purpose of the *Commedia*;—to produce on the mind a sense of the judgments of God, analogous to that produced by Scripture itself. They are presented to us in the Bible in shapes which address themselves primarily to the heart and conscience, and seek not carefully to explain themselves. They are likened to the "great deep," to the "strong mountains"—vast and awful, but abrupt and incomplete, as the huge, broken, rugged piles and chains of mountains. And we see them through cloud and mist, in shapes only approximating to the true ones. Still they impress us deeply and truly, often the more deeply because unconsciously. A character, an event, a word, isolated and unexplained, stamps its meaning ineffaceably, though ever a matter of question and wonder; it may be dark to the intellect, yet the conscience understands it, often but too well. In such suggestive ways is the Divine government for the most part put before us in the Bible—ways which do not satisfy the understanding, but which fill us with a sense of reality. And it seems to have been by meditating on them, which he certainly did, much and thoughtfully—and

on the infinite variety of similar ways in which the strongest impressions are conveyed to us in ordinary life, by means short of clear and distinct explanation —by looks, by images, by sounds, by motions, by remote allusion and broken words, that Dante was led to choose so new and remarkable a mode of conveying to his countrymen his thoughts and feelings and presentiments about the mystery of God's counsel. The Bible teaches us by means of real history, traced so far as is necessary along its real course. The poet expresses his view of the world also in real history, but carried on into figure.

The poetry with which the Christian Church had been instinct from the beginning, converges and is gathered up in the *Commedia*. The faith had early shown its poetical aspect. It is superfluous to dwell on this, for it is the charge against ancient teaching that it was too large and imaginative. It soon began to try rude essays in sculpture and mosaic: expressed its feeling of nature in verse and prose, rudely also, but often with originality and force; and opened a new vein of poetry in the thoughts, hopes, and aspirations of regenerate man. Modern poetry must go back, for many of its deepest and most powerful sources, to the writings of the Fathers, and their followers of the School. The Church further had a poetry of its own, besides the poetry of literature;

it had the poetry of devotion—the Psalter chanted daily, in a new language and a new meaning; and that wonderful body of hymns, to which age after age had contributed its offering, from the Ambrosian hymns to the *Veni, Sancte Spiritus* of a king of France, the *Pange lingua* of Thomas Aquinas, the *Dies iræ*, and *Stabat Mater*, of the two Franciscan brethren, Thomas of Celano, and Jacopone.* The elements and fragments of poetry were everywhere in the Church—in her ideas of life, in her rules and institutions for passing through it, in her preparation for death, in her offices, ceremonial, celebrations, usages, her consecration of domestic, literary, commercial, civic, military, political life, the meanings and ends she had given them, the religious seriousness with which the forms of each were dignified—in her doctrine, and her dogmatic system—her dependence on the unseen world—her Bible. From each and all of these, and from that public feeling, which, if it expressed itself but abruptly and incoherently, was quite alive to the poetry which surrounded it, the poet received due impressions of greatness and beauty, of joy and dread. Then the poetry of Christian religion and Christian temper, hitherto dispersed, or manifested in act only, found its full and

* Trench, Sacred Latin Poetry, 1849.

distinct utterance, not unworthy to rank in grandeur, in music, in sustained strength, with the last noble voices from expiring Heathenism.

But a long interval had passed since then. The *Commedia* first disclosed to Christian and modern Europe that it was to have a literature of its own, great and admirable, though in its own language and embodying its own ideas. "It was as if, at some of the ancient games, a stranger had appeared upon the plain, and thrown his quoit among the marks of former casts, which tradition had ascribed to the demi-gods." * We are so accustomed to the excellent and varied literature of modern times, so original, so perfect in form and rich in thought, so expressive of all our sentiments, meeting so completely our wants, fulfilling our ideas, that we can scarcely imagine the time when this condition was new—when society was beholden to a foreign language for the exponents of its highest thoughts and feelings. But so it was when Dante wrote. The great poets, historians, philosophers of his day, the last great works of intellect, belonged to old Rome, and the Latin language. So wonderful and prolonged was the fascination of Rome. Men still lived under its influence; believed that the Latin language was the

* Hallam's *Middle Ages*, c. ix. vol. iii. p. 563.

perfect and permanent instrument of thought in its highest forms, the only expression of refinement and civilisation; and had not conceived the hope that their own dialects could ever rise to such heights of dignity and power. Latin, which had enchased and preserved such precious remains of ancient wisdom, was now shackling the living mind in its efforts. Men imagined that they were still using it naturally on all high themes and solemn business; but though they used it with facility, it was no longer natural; it had lost the elasticity of life, and had become in their hands a stiffened and distorted, though still powerful, instrument. The very use of the word *latino* in the writers of this period, to express what is clear and philosophical in language,* while it shows their deep reverence for it, shows how Latin civilisation was no longer their own, how it had insensibly become an external and foreign element. But they found it very hard to resign their claim to a share in its glories; with nothing of their own to match against it, they still delighted to speak of it as "our language," or its writers as "our poets," "our historians." †

The spell was indeed beginning to break. Guido

* *Parad.* 3, 12, 17. *Convit.* p. 108. "A più *Latinamente* vedere la sentenza letterale."

† *Vid.* the *De Monarchiâ*

Cavalcanti, Dante's strange, stern, speculative friend, who is one of the fathers of the Italian language, is characterised in the *Commedia** by his scornful dislike of Latin, even in the mouth of Virgil. Yet Dante himself, the great assertor, by argument and example, of the powers of the Vulgar tongue, once dared not to think that the Vulgar tongue could be other to the Latin, than as a subject to his sovereign. He was bolder when he wrote *De Vulgari Eloquio*: but in the earlier *Convito*, while pleading earnestly for the beauty of the Italian, he yields with reverence the first place to the Latin—for nobleness, because the Latin is permanent, and the Vulgar subject to fluctuation and corruption; for power, because the Latin can express conceptions to which the Vulgar is unequal; for beauty, because the structure of the Latin is a masterly arrangement of scientific art, and the beauty of the Vulgar depends on mere use.† The very title of his poem, the *Commedia*, contains in it a homage to the lofty claims of the Latin. It is called a Comedy, and not Tragedy, he says, after a marvellous account of the essence and etymology of the two, first, because it begins sadly, and ends joyfully; and next, because of its language, that humble

* *Inf.* 10, and compare the *Vit. N.* p. 334, ed. Fraticelli.

† *Convito*, i. 5.

speech of ordinary life, "in which even women converse." *

He honoured the Latin, but his love was for the Italian. He was its champion, and indignant defender against the depreciation of ignorance and fashion. Confident of its power and jealous of its beauty, he pours forth his fierce scorn on the blind stupidity, the

* Ep. ad Kan Grand. § 9,—a curious specimen of the learning of the time: "Sciendum est, quod *Comœdia* dicitur a κωμη, *villa* et ωδη, quod est *cantus*, unde *Comœdia* quasi *villanus cantus*. Et est *Comœdia genus quoddam poeticæ narrationis*, ab omnibus aliis differens. Differt ergo a Tragœdia in materia per hoc, quod Tragœdia in principio est admirabilis et quieta, in fine fœtida et horribilis; et dicitur propter hoc a τραγος, i.e. *hircus*, et ωδη, quasi *cantus hircinus*, i.e. fœtidus ad modum hirci, ut patet per Senecam in suis tragœdiis. *Comœdia* vero inchoat asperitatem alicujus rei, sed ejus materia prospere terminatur, ut patet per Terentium in suis *Comœdiis*. . . . Similiter differunt in modo loquendi; elate et sublime Tragœdia, *Comœdia* vero remisse et humiliter sicut vult Horat. in Poët. . . . Et per hoc patet, quod *Comœdia* diciter præsens opus. Nam si ad materiam respiciamus, a principio horribilis et fœtida est, quia *Infernus*: in fine prospera, desiderabilis et grata, quia *Paradisus*. Si ad modum loquendi, remissus est modus et humilis, quia locutio Vulgaris, in qua et mulierculæ communicant. Et sic patet quia *Comœdia* dicitur." Cf. de Vulg. Eloq. 2, 4, *Parad.* 30. He calls the Æneid, "*l' alta Tragedia*," *Inf.* 20, 113. Compare also Boccaccio's explanation of his mother's dream of the *peacock*. Dante, he says, is like the Peacock, among other reasons, "because the peacock has coarse feet, and a quiet gait;" and "the vulgar language, on which the *Commedia* supports itself, is coarse in comparison with the high and masterly literary style which every other poet uses, though it be more beautiful than others, being in conformity with modern minds. The quiet gait signifies the humility of the style, which is necessarily required in *Commedia*, as those know who understand what is meant by *Commedia*."

affectation, the vain glory, the envy, and above all, the cowardice of Italians who held lightly their mother tongue. "Many," he says, after enumerating the other offenders, "from this pusillanimity and cowardice disparage their own language, and exalt that of others; and of this sort are those hateful dastards of Italy—*abbominevoli cattivi d' Italia*—who think vilely of that precious language; which, if it is vile in anything, is vile only so far as it sounds in the prostituted mouth of these adulterers."* He noted and compared its various dialects; he asserted its capabilities not only in verse, but in expressive, flexible, and majestic prose. And to the deliberate admiration of the critic and the man, were added the homely but dear associations, which no language can share with that of early days. Italian had been the language of his parents—"*Questo mio Volgare fu il congiugnitore delli mici generanti, che con esso parlavano*" —and further, it was this modern language, "*questo mio Volgare*," which opened to him the way of knowledge, which had introduced him to Latin, and the sciences which it contained. It was his benefactor and guide—he personifies it—and his boyish friendship had grown stronger and more intimate by mutual good offices. "There has also been between us the

* *Convito*, i. 11.

goodwill of intercourse; for from the beginning of my life I have had with it kindness and conversation, and have used it, deliberating, interpreting, and questioning; so that, if friendship grows with use, it is evident how it must have grown in me." *

From this language he exacted a hard trial;—a work which should rank with the ancient works. None such had appeared; none had even advanced such a pretension. Not that it was a time dead to literature or literary ambition. Poets and historians had written, and were writing in Italian. The same year of jubilee which fixed itself so deeply in Dante's mind, and became the epoch of his vision—the same scene of Roman greatness in its decay, which afterwards suggested to Gibbon the *Decline and Fall*, prompted, in the father of Italian history, the desire to follow in the steps of Sallust and Livy, and prepare the way for Machiavelli and Guicciardini, Davila, and Fra Paolo. † Poetry had been cultivated in the

* *Convito*, i. 13.

† G. Villani was at Rome in the year of jubilee 1300, and describes the great concourse and order of the pilgrims, whom he reckons at 200,000, in the course of the year. "And I," he proceeds, "finding myself in that blessed pilgrimage in the holy city of Rome, seeing the great and ancient things of the same, and reading the histories of the great deeds of the Romans, written by Virgil, and by Sallust, and Lucan, and Titus Livius, and Valerius, and Paulus Orosius, and other masters of histories, who wrote as well of the smaller matters as of the greater, concerning the exploits and deeds of the

Roman languages of the West—in Aquitaine and Provence, especially—for more than two centuries; and lately, with spirit and success, in Italian. Names had become popular, reputations had risen and waned, verses circulated and were criticised, and even descended from the high and refined circles to the workshop. A story is told of Dante's indignation, when he heard the canzoni which had charmed the Florentine ladies mangled by the rude enthusiasm of a blacksmith at his forge.* Literature was a growing fashion; but it was humble in its aspirations and efforts. Men wrote like children, surprised and pleased with their success; yet allowing themselves in mere amusement, because conscious of weakness which they could not cure.

Romans; and further, of the strange things of the whole world, for memory and example's sake to those who should come after—I, too, took their style and fashion, albeit that, as their scholar, I be not worthy to execute such a work. But, considering that our city of Florence, the daughter and creation of Rome, was in its rising, and on the eve of achieving great things, as Rome was in its decline, it seemed to me convenient to bring into this volume and new chronicle all the deeds and beginnings of the city of Florence, so far as I have been able to gather and recover them; and for the future, to follow at large the doings of the Florentines, and the other notable things of the world briefly, as long as it may be God's pleasure; under which hope, rather by his grace than by my poor science, I entered on this enterprise: and so, in the year 1300, being returned from Rome, I began to compile this book, in reverence towards God and St. John, and commendation of our city of Florence."—*G. Vill.* viii. 36.

* *Sacchetti*, Nov. 114.

Dante, by the *Divina Commedia*, was the restorer of seriousness in literature. He was so, by the magnitude and pretensions of his work, and by the earnestness of its spirit. He first broke through the prescription which had confined great works to the Latin, and the faithless prejudices which, in the language of society, could see powers fitted for no higher task than that of expressing, in curiously diversified forms, its most ordinary feelings. But he did much more. Literature was going astray in its tone, while growing in importance; the *Commedia* checked it. The Provençal and Italian poetry was, with the exception of some pieces of political satire, almost exclusively amatory, in the most fantastic and affected fashion. In expression, it had not even the merit of being natural; in purpose it was trifling; in the spirit which it encouraged, it was something worse. Doubtless it brought a degree of refinement with it, but it was refinement purchased at a high price, by intellectual distortion, and moral insensibility. But this was not all. The brilliant age of Frederick II., for such it was, was deeply mined by religious unbelief. However strange this charge first sounds against the thirteenth century, no one can look at all closely into its history, at least in Italy, without seeing that the idea of infidelity—not heresy, but infidelity—was quite a familiar one; and that

side by side with the theology of Aquinas and Bonaventura, there was working among those who influenced fashion and opinion, among the great men, and the men to whom learning was a profession, a spirit of scepticism and irreligion almost monstrous for its time, which found its countenance in Frederick's refined and enlightened court. The genius of the great doctors might have kept in safety the Latin Schools, but not the free and home thoughts which found utterance in the language of the people, if the solemn beauty of the Italian *Commedia* had not seized on all minds. It would have been an evil thing for Italian, perhaps for European literature, if the siren tales of the *Decameron* had been the first to occupy the ear with the charms of a new language.

Dante has had hard measure, and from some who are most beholden to him. No one in his day served the Church more highly, than he whose faith and genius secured on her side the first great burst of imagination and feeling, the first perfect accents of modern speech. The first-fruits of the new literature were consecrated, and offered up. There was no necessity, or even probability in Italy in the fourteenth century that it should be so, as there might perhaps have been earlier. It was the poet's free act—free in one, for whom nature and heathen learning had strong temptations—that religion was the lesson and

influence of the great popular work of the time. That which he held up before men's awakened and captivated minds, was the verity of God's moral government. To rouse them to a sense of the mystery of their state; to startle their commonplace notions of sin into an imagination of its variety, its magnitude, and its infinite shapes and degrees; to open their eyes to the beauty of the Christian temper, both as suffering and as consummated; to teach them at once the faithfulness and awful freeness of God's grace; to help the dull and lagging soul to conceive the possibility, in its own case, of rising step by step in joy without an end—of a felicity not unimaginable by man, though of another order from the highest perfection of earth;—this is the poet's end. Nor was it only vague religious feelings which he wished to excite. He brought within the circle of common thought, and translated into the language of the multitude, what the Schools had done to throw light on the deep questions of human existence, which all are fain to muse upon, though none can solve. He who had opened so much of men's hearts to themselves, opened to them also that secret sympathy which exists between them and the great mysteries of the Christian doctrine.* He did the work, in

* *Vide* Ozanam.

his day, of a great preacher. Yet he has been both claimed and condemned, as a disturber of the Church's faith.

He certainly did not spare the Church's rulers. He thought they were betraying the most sacred of all trusts; and if history is at all to be relied on, he had some grounds for thinking so. But it is confusing the feelings of the middle ages with our own, to convert every fierce attack on the Popes into an anticipation of Luther. Strong language of this sort was far too commonplace to be so significant. No age is blind to practical abuses, or silent on them; and when the middle ages complained, they did so with a full-voiced and clamorous rhetoric, which greedily seized on every topic of vilification within its reach. It was far less singular, and far less bold, to criticise ecclesiastical authorities, than is often supposed; but it by no means implied unsettled faith, or a revolutionary design. In Dante's case, if words have any meaning—not words of deliberate qualification, but his unpremeditated and incidental expressions—his faith in the Divine mission and spiritual powers of the Popes was as strong as his abhorrence of their degeneracy, and desire to see it corrected by a power which they would respect—that of the temporal sword. It would be to mistake altogether his character, to imagine of him, either as a fault or

as an excellence, that he was a doubter. It might as well be supposed of Aquinas.

No one ever acknowledged with greater seriousness, as a fact in his position in the world, the agreement in faith among those with whom he was born. No one ever inclined with more simplicity and reverence before that long communion and consent in feeling and purpose, the "*publicus* sensus" of the Christian Church. He did feel difficulties; but the excitement of lingering on them was not among his enjoyments. That was the lot of the heathen; Virgil, made wise by death, counsels him not to desire it:

"Matto è chi spera, che nostra ragione
Possa trascorrer la 'nfinita via
Che tiene una sustanzia in tre Persone.
State contenti, umana gente, al *quia*;
Che se potuto aveste veder tutto,
Mestier non era partorir Maria:
E disiar vedeste senza frutto
Tai, che sarebbe lor disio quetato,
Ch' eternamente è dato lor per lutto;
I' dico d' Aristotile e di Plato,
E di molti altri:"—e qui chinò la fronte,
E più non disse, e rimase turbato.—*Purg.* c. 3.*

* "Insensate he, who thinks with mortal ken
To pierce Infinitude, which doth enfold
Three Persons in one Substance. Seek not then,
O mortal race, for reasons—but believe,
And be contented; for had all been seen,
No need there was for Mary to conceive.

The Christian poet felt that it was greater to believe and to act. In the darkness of the world one bright light appeared, and he followed it. Providence had assigned him his portion of truth, his portion of daily bread; if to us it appears blended with human elements, it is perfectly clear that he was in no position to sift them. To choose was no trial of his. To examine and seek, where it was impossible to find, would have been folly. The authority from which he started had not yet been seriously questioned; there were no palpable signs of doubtfulness on the system which was to him the representative of God's will; and he sought for none. It came to him claiming his allegiance by custom, by universality, by its completeness as a whole, and satisfying his intellect and his sympathies in detail. And he gave his allegiance — reasonably, because there was nothing to hope for in doubting—wisely, because he gave it loyally and from his heart.

And he had his reward—the reward of him who throws himself with frankness and earnestness into a system; who is not afraid or suspicious of it; who is

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Men have ye known, who thus desired in vain;
And whose desires, that might at rest have been,
Now constitute a source of endless pain;
Plato, the Stagirite; and many more,
I here allude to;"—then his head he bent,
Was silent, and a troubled aspect wore.—WRIGHT.

not unfaithful to it. He gained not merely power—he gained that freedom and largeness of mind which the suspicious or the unfaithful miss. His loyalty to the Church was no cramping or blinding service; it left to its full play that fresh and original mind, left it to range at will in all history and all nature for the traces of Eternal wisdom, left it to please itself with all beauty, and pay its homage to all excellence. For upon all wisdom, beauty, and excellence, the Church had taught him to see, in various and duly distinguished degrees, the seal of the one Creator. She imparts to the poem, to its form and progressive development, her own solemnity, her awe, her calm, her serenity and joy; it follows her sacred seasons and hours; repeats her appointed words of benediction and praise; moulds itself on her belief, her expectations, and forecastings.* Her intimations, more or less distinct, dogma or tradition or vague hint, guide the poet's imagination through the land where all eyes are open. The journey begins under the Easter moon of the year of jubilee, on the evening of Good Friday; the days of her mourning he spends in the regions of woe, where none dares to pronounce the name of the Redeemer, and he issues forth to "behold again the stars," to learn how to die to sin and rise to

* See an article in the *Brit. Critic*, No. 65, p. 120.

righteousness, very early in the morning, as it begins to dawn, on the day of the Resurrection. The whole arrangement of the *Purgatorio* is drawn from Church usages. It is a picture of men suffering in calm and holy hope the sharp discipline of repentance, amid the prayers, the melodies, the consoling images and thoughts, the orderly ritual, the hours of devotion, the sacraments of the Church militant. When he ascends in his hardiest flight, and imagines the joys of the perfect and the vision of God, his abundant fancy confines itself strictly to the limits sanctioned by her famous teachers—ventures into no new sphere, hazards no anticipations in which they have not preceded it, and is content with adding to the poetry which it elicits from their ideas, a beauty which it is able to conceive apart altogether from bodily form—the beauty, infinite in its variety, of the expression of the human eye and smile—the beauty of light, of sound, of motion. And when his song mounts to its last strain of triumph, and the poet's thought, imagination, and feeling of beauty, tasked to the utmost, nor failing under the weight of glory which they have to express, breathe themselves forth in words, higher than which no poetry has ever risen, and represent, in images transcending sense, and baffling it, yet missing not one of those deep and transporting sympathies which they were to touch,

the sight, eye to eye, of the Creator by the creature—he beholds the gathering together, in the presence of God, of "all that from our earth has to the skies returned," and of the countless orders of their thrones mirrored in His light—

Mira
Quanto è 'l convento delle bianche stole—

under a figure already taken into the ceremonial of the Church—the mystic Rose, whose expanding leaves image forth the joy of the heavenly Jerusalem, both triumphant and militant.*

* See the form of benediction of the "Rosa d' oro." *Rituum Ecclesiæ Rom. Libri Tres.* fol. xxxv. Venet 1516. Form of giving: "Accipe rosam de manibus nostris. . . . per quam designatus gaudium utriusque Hierusalem triumphantis scilicet et militantis ecclesiæ per quam omnibus Christi fidelibus manifestatur flos ipse pretiosissimus qui est gaudium et corona sanctorum omnium." He alludes to it in the *Convito*, iv. 29.

O i splendor di Dio, per cu' io vidi
L' alto trionfo del regno verace,
Dammi virtù a dir com' io lo vidi.
Lume è lassù, che visibile face
Lo creatore a quella creatura,
Che solo in lui vedere ha la sua pace;
E si distende in circular figura
In tanto, che la sua circonferenza
Sarebbe al Sol troppo larga cintura.
* * * *
E come clivo in acqua di suo imo
Si specchia quasi per vedersi adorno,
Quanto è nel verde e ne' fioretti opimo;
Sì soprastando al lume intorno intorno
Vidi specchiarsi in più di mille soglie,
Quanto di noi lassù fatto ha ritorno.

But this universal reference to the religious ideas of the Church is so natural, so unaffected, that it leaves him at full liberty in other orders of thought. He can afford not to be conventional—he can afford to be comprehensive and genuine. It has been remarked how, in a poem where there would seem to be a fitting place for them, the ecclesiastical legends of the middle ages are almost entirely absent. The sainted spirits of the *Paradiso* are not exclusively or chiefly the Saints of popular devotion. After the Saints of the Bible, the holy women, the three great Apostles, the Virgin mother, they are either names personally dear to the poet himself, friends whom he had loved, and teachers to whom he owed wisdom—

E se l' infimo grado in se raccoglie
Sì grande lume, quant' è la larghezza
Di questa rosa nell' estreme foglie?
* * * *
Nel giallo della rosa sempiterna,
Che si dilata, rigrada, e redole
Odor di lode al Sol, che sempre verna,
Qual' è colui, che tace e dicer vuole,
Mi trasse Beatrice, e disse; mira
Quanto è 'l convento delle bianche stole!
Vedi nostra Città quanto ella gira!
Vedi li nostri scanni sì ripieni,
Che poca gente omai ci si disira.
* * * *
In forma dunque di candida rosa
Mi si mostrava la milizia santa,
Che nel suo sangue Cristo fece sposa.—*Parad.* 30, 31.

or great men of masculine energy in thought or action, in their various lines "compensations and antagonists of the world's evils" — Justinian and Constantine, and Charlemagne—the founders of the Orders, Augustine, Benedict, and Bernard, Francis and Dominic—the great doctors of the Schools, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventura, whom the Church had not yet canonized. And with them are joined—and that with a full consciousness of the line which theology draws between the dispensations of nature and grace—some rare types of virtue among the heathen. Cato is admitted to the outskirts of Purgatory; Trajan, and the righteous king of Virgil's poem, to the heaven of the just.*

Without confusion or disturbance to the religious character of his train of thought, he is able freely to subordinate to it the lessons and the great recollections of the Gentile times. He contemplates them with the veil drawn off from them; as now known to

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Chi crederebbe giù nel mondo errante,
Che Rifèo Trojano[1] in questo tondo
Fosse la quinta delle luci sante?
Ora conosce assai di quel, che 'l mondo
Veder non può della divina grazia;
Benchè sua vista non discerna il fondo.—*Parad.* c. 20.

[1] Rhipeus justissimus unus
Qui fuit in Teucris, et servantissimus æqui.—*Æn.* ii.

form but one whole with the history of the Bible and the Church, in the design of Providence. He presents them in their own colours, as drawn by their own writers—he only adds what Christianity seems to show to be their event. Under the conviction, that the light of the Heathen was a real guide from above, calling for vengeance in proportion to unfaithfulness, or outrage done to it—"He that nurtureth the heathen, it is He that teacheth man knowledge—shall not He punish?"—the great criminals of profane history are mingled with sinners against God's revealed will—and that, with equal dramatic power, with equal feeling of the greatness of their loss. The story of the voyage of Ulysses is told with as much vivid power and pathetic interest as the tales of the day.* He honours unfeignedly the old heathen's brave disdain of ease; that spirit, even to old age, eager, fresh, adventurous, and inquisitive. His faith allowed him to admire all that was beautiful and excellent among the heathen, without forgetting that it fell short of what the new gift of the Gospel can alone impart. He saw in it proof that God had never left His will and law without their witness among men. Virtue was virtue still, though imperfect, and unconsecrated—generosity, largeness of soul, truth,

* *Inf.* c. 26.

condescension, justice, were never unworthy of the reverence of Christians. Hence he uses without fear or scruple the classic element. The examples which recall to the minds of the penitents, by sounds and sights, in the different terraces of Purgatory, their sin and the grace they have to attain to, come indiscriminately from poetry and Scripture. The sculptured pavement, to which the proud are obliged ever to bow down their eyes, shows at once the humility of S. Mary and of the Psalmist, and the condescension of Trajan; and elsewhere the pride of Nimrod and Sennacherib, of Niobe, and Cyrus. The envious hear the passing voices of courtesy from saints and heroes, and the bursting cry, like crashing thunder, of repentant jealousy from Cain and Aglaurus; the avaricious, to keep up the memory of their fault, celebrate by day the poverty of Fabricius and the liberality of S. Nicolas, and execrate by night the greediness of Pygmalion and Midas, of Achan, Heliodorus, and Crassus.

Dante's all-surveying, all-embracing mind, was worthy to open the grand procession of modern poets. He had chosen his subject in a region remote from popular thought—too awful for it, too abstruse. He had accepted frankly the dogmatic limits of the Church, and thrown himself with even enthusiastic faith into her reasonings, at once so bold and so

undoubting—her spirit of certainty, and her deep contemplations on the unseen and infinite. And in literature, he had taken as guides and models, above all criticism and all appeal, the classical writers. Yet with his mind full of the deep and intricate questions of metaphysics and theology, and his poetical taste always owning allegiance to Virgil, Ovid, and Statius —keen and subtle as a Schoolman—as much an idolator of old heathen art and grandeur as the men of the *Renaissance*—his eye is as open to the delicacies of character, to the variety of external nature, to the wonders of the physical world—his interest in them as diversified and fresh, his impressions as sharp and distinct, his rendering of them as free and true and forcible, as little weakened or confused by imitation or by conventional words, his language as elastic, and as completely under his command, his choice of poetic materials as unrestricted and original, as if he had been born in days which claim as their own such freedom, and such keen discriminative sense of what is real, in feeling and image;—as if he had never felt the attractions of a crabbed problem of scholastic logic, or bowed before the mellow grace of the Latins. It may be said, indeed, that the time was not yet come when the classics could be really understood and appreciated; and this is true, perhaps fortunate. But admiring them with a kind of devotion, and

showing not seldom that he had caught their spirit, he never *attempts* to copy them. His poetry in form and material is all his own. He asserted the poet's claim to borrow from all science, and from every phase of nature, the associations and images which he wants; and he showed that those images and associations did not lose their poetry by being expressed with the most literal reality.

But let no reader of fastidious taste disturb his temper by the study of Dante. Dante certainly opened that path of freedom and poetic conquest, in which the greatest efforts of modern poetry have followed him—opened it with a magnificence and power which have never been surpassed. But the greatest are but pioneers; they must be content to leave to a posterity, which knows more, if it cannot do as much, a keen and even growing sense of their defects. The *Commedia* is open to all the attacks that can be made on grotesqueness and extravagance. This is partly owing, doubtless, to the time, in itself quaint, quainter to us, by being remote and ill-understood; but even then, weaker and less daring writers than Dante do not equally offend or astonish us. So that an image or an expression will render forcibly a thought, there is no strangeness which checks him. Barbarous words are introduced, to express the cries of the demons or the confusion of

Babel—even to represent the incomprehensible song of the blessed;* inarticulate syllables, to convey the impression of some natural sound—the cry of sorrowful surprise:

> Alto sospir, che duolo strinse in *hui*;—*Purg.* 16.

or the noise of the cracking ice:

> Se Tabernicch
> Vi fosse su caduto, o Pietra-pana
> Non avria pur del orlo fatto *cricch*;—*Inf.* 32.

even separate letters—to express an image, to spell a name, or as used in some popular proverb.† He employs without scruple, and often with marvellous force of description, any recollection that occurs to him, however homely, of everyday life;—the old tailor threading his needle with trouble (*Inf.* 15);—the cook's assistant watching over the boiling broth (*Inf.* 21);—the hurried or impatient horse-groom

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Parad. 7, 1–3.

† To describe the pinched face of famine;—

> Parean l' occhiaje annella senza gemme.
> Chi nel viso degli uomini legge OMO
> Ben avria quivi conosciuto l' *emme* (M).—*Purg.* 23.

Again,

> Quella reverenza che s' indonna
> Di tutto me, pur per B e per ICE.—*Parad.* 7.
>
> Nè O si tosto mai, nè I si scrisse,
> Com' ei s' accese ed arse.—*Inf.* 24.

using his curry-comb (*Inf.* 29);—or the common sights of the street or the chamber—the wet wood sputtering on the hearth:

> Come d' un stizzo verde che arso sia
> Dall' un de' capi, che dall' altro geme
> E cigola per vento che va via;—*Inf.* 13.*

the paper changing colour when about to catch fire:

> Come procede innanzi dall' ardore
> Per lo papiro suso un color bruno
> Che non è nero ancora, e 'l bianco muore:—*Inf.* 25.†

the steaming of the hand when bathed, in winter:

> Fuman come man bagnata il verno:—

or the ways and appearances of animals—ants meeting on their path:

> Lì veggio d' ogni parte farsi presta
> Ciascun' ombra, e baciarsi una con una
> Senza restar, contente a breve festa:
> Così per entro loro schiera bruna
> *S' ammusa l' una con l' altra formica,*
> Forse a spiar lor via e lor fortuna;—*Purg.* 26.‡

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* Like to a sapling, lighted at one end,
Which at the other hisses with the wind,
And drops of sap doth from the outlet send:
So from the broken twig, both words and blood flow'd forth.
WRIGHT.

† Like burning paper, when there glides before
The advancing flame a brown and dingy shade,
Which is not black, and yet is white no more.—IBID.

‡ On either hand I saw them haste their meeting,
And kiss each one the other—pausing not—
Contented to enjoy so short a greeting.

the snail drawing in its horns (*Inf.* 25);—the hog shut out of its sty, and trying to gore with its tusks (*Inf.* 30);—the dogs' misery in summer (*Inf.* 17);—the frogs jumping on to the bank before the water-snake (*Inf.* 9);—or showing their heads above water:

> Come al orlo dell' acqua d' un fosso
> Stan gli ranocchi *pur col muso fuori*,
> Sì che celano i piedi, e l' altro grosso.—*Inf.* 22.*

It must be said, that most of these images, though by no means all, occur in the *Inferno*; and that the poet means to paint sin not merely in the greatness of its ruin and misery, but in characters which all understand, of strangeness, of vileness, of despicableness, blended with diversified and monstrous horror. Even he seems to despair of his power at times:

> S' io avessi le rime e aspre, e chiocce,
> Come si converrebbe al tristo buco,
> Sovra 'l qual pontan tutte l' altre rocce;

Thus do the ants among their dingy band,
Face one another—each their neighbour's lot
Haply to scan, and how their fortunes stand.—WRIGHT.

* As in a trench, frogs at the water side
Sit squatting, with their noses raised on high
The while their feet, and all their bulk they hide—
Thus upon either hand the sinners stood.
But Barbariccia now approaching nigh,
Quick they withdrew beneath the boiling flood.
I saw—and still my heart is thrill'd with fear—
One spirit linger; as beside a ditch,
One frog remains, the others disappear.—IBID.

Io premerrei di mio concetto il suco
Più pienamente; ma perch' io non l' abbo,
Non senza tema a dicer mi conduco:
Che non è 'mpresa da pigliare a gabbo
Descriver fondo a tutto l' universo,
Nè da lingua, che chiami mamma, o babbo.—*Inf.* 32.*.

Feeling the difference between sins, in their elements and, as far as we see them, their baseness, he treats them variously. His ridicule is apportioned with a purpose. He passes on from the doom of the sins of incontinence—the storm, the frost and hail, the crushing weights—from the flaming minarets of the city of Dis, of the Furies and Proserpine, "Donna dell' eterno pianto," where the unbelievers lie, each in his burning tomb—from the river of boiling blood—the wood with the Harpies—the waste of barren sand with fiery snow, where the violent are punished—to the Malebolge, the manifold circles of Falsehood. And here scorn and ridicule in various degrees, according to the vileness of the fraud, begin to predominate, till they culminate in that grim comedy,

* Had I a rhyme so rugged, rough, and hoarse
As would become the sorrowful abyss,
O'er which the rocky circles wind their course,
Then with a more appropriate form I might
Endow my vast conceptions; wanting this,
Not without fear I bring myself to write.
For no light enterprise it is, I deem,
To represent the lowest depth of all;
Nor should a childish tongue attempt the theme.—WRIGHT.

with its *dramatis personæ* and battle of devils, Draghignazzo, and Graffiacane, and Malacoda, where the peculators and sellers of justice are fished up by the demons from the boiling pitch, but even there overreach and cheat their tormentors, and make them turn their fangs on each other. The diversified forms of falsehood seem to tempt the poet's imagination to cope with its changefulness and inventions, as well as its audacity. The transformations of the wildest dream do not daunt him. His power over language is nowhere more forcibly displayed than in those cantos, which describe the punishments of theft —men passing gradually into serpents, and serpents into men:

> Due e nessun l' imagine perversa
> Parea.—*Inf.* 25.

And when the traitor, who murdered his own kinsman, was still alive, and seemed safe from the infamy which it was the poet's rule to bestow only on the dead, Dante found a way to inflict his vengeance without an anachronism;—Branca D'Oria's body, though on earth, is only animated by a fiend, and his spirit has long since fled to the icy prison.*

* Ed egli a me: Come 'l mio corpo stea
Nel mondo su, nulla scienzia porto.
Cotal vantaggio ha questa Tolommea,
Che spesse volte l' anima ci cade
Innanzi, ch' Atropòs mossa le dea.

These are strange experiments in poetry; their strangeness is exaggerated as detached passages; but they are strange enough when they meet us in their place in the context, as parts of a scene, where the mind is strung and overawed by the sustained power, with which dreariness, horror, hideous absence of every form of good, is kept before the imagination and feelings, in the fearful picture of human sin. But they belong to the poet's system of direct and forcible representation. What his inward eye sees, what he feels, that he means us to see and feel as he does; to make us see and feel is his art. Afterwards we may

E perchè tu più volontier mi rade
Le 'nvetriate lagrime dal volto,
Sappi, che tosto che l' anima trade,
Come fec' io, il corpo suo l' è tolto
Da un Dimonio, che poscia il governa,
Mentre che 'l tempo suo tutto sia volto.
Ella ruina in sì fatta cisterna;
E forse pare ancor lo corpo suso
Dell' ombra, che di qua dietro mi verna.
Tu 'l dei saper, se tu vien pur mo giuso:
Egli è ser Branca d' Oria, e son più anni
Poscia passati, ch' ei fu sì racchiuso.
Io credo, diss' io lui, che tu m' inganni,
Che Branca d' Oria non morì unquanche,
E mangia, e bee, e dorme, e veste panni.
Nel fosso su, diss' ei, di Malebranche,
Là dove bolle la tenace pece,
Non era giunto ancora Michel Zanche;
Che questi lasciò 'l diavolo in sua vece
Nel corpo suo, e d' un suo prossimano,
Che 'l tradimento insieme con lui fece.—*Inf.* 33.

reflect and meditate; but first we must see—must see what he saw. Evil and deformity are in the world, as well as good and beauty; the eye cannot escape them, they are about our path, in our heart and memory. He has faced them without shrinking or dissembling, and extorted from them a voice of warning. In all poetry that is written for mere delight, in all poetry which regards but a part or an aspect of nature, they have no place—they disturb and mar; but he had conceived a poetry of the whole, which would be weak or false without them. Yet they stand in his poem as they stand in nature—subordinate and relieved. If the grotesque is allowed to intrude itself—if the horrible and the foul, undisguised and unsoftened, make us shudder and shrink, they are kept in strong check and in due subjection by other poetical influences; and the same power which exhibits them in their naked strength, renders its full grace and glory to beauty; its full force and delicacy to the most evanescent feeling.

Dante's eye was free and open to external nature in a degree new among poets; certainly in a far greater degree than among the Latins, even including Lucretius, whom he probably had never read. We have already spoken of his minute notice of the appearance of living creatures; but his eye was caught by the beautiful as well as by the grotesque.

Take the following beautiful picture of the bird looking out for dawn :

Come l'augello intra l'amate fronde,
Posato al nido de' suoi dolci nati,
La notte, che le cose ci nasconde,
Che per veder gli aspetti desiati,
E per trovar lo cibo, onde li pasca,
In che i gravi labor gli sono aggrati,
Previene 'l tempo in su l'aperta frasca,
E con ardente affetto il sole aspetta,
Fiso guardando, pur che l'alba nasca.—*Parad.* 23.*

Nothing indeed can be more true and original than his images of birds; they are varied and very numerous. We have the water-birds rising in clamorous and changing flocks :

Come augelli surti di riviera
Quasi congratulando a lor pasture,
Fanno di sè or tonda or lunga schiera ;—*Parad.* 18.†

* E'en as the bird that resting in the nest
Of her sweet brood, the shelt'ring boughs among
While all things are enwrapt in night's dark vest—
Now eager to behold the looks she loves,
And to find food for her impatient young
(Whence labour grateful to a mother proves),
Forestalls the time, high perch'd upon the spray,
And with impassion'd zeal the sun expecting,
Anxiously waiteth the first break of day.—WRIGHT.

† And as birds rising from a stream, whence they
Their pastures view, as though their joy confessing,
Now form a round, and now a long array.—IBID.

the rooks, beginning to move about at daybreak :

E come per lo natural costume,
Le pole insieme, al cominciar del giorno
Si muovono a scaldar le fredde piume,
Poi altre vanno via senza ritorno,
Altre rivolgon sè onde son mosse
Ed altre roteando fan soggiorno ;—*Parad.* 21.*

the morning sounds of the swallow :

Nell' ora che comincia i tristi lai
La rondinella presso alla mattina,
Forse a memoria de' suoi primi guai ;—*Purg.* 9.†

the joy and delight of the nightingale's song (*Purg.* 17) ; the lark, silent at last, filled with its own sweetness :

Qual lodoletta, che 'n aere si spazia,
Prima cantando, e *poi tace contenta*
Dell' ultima dolcezza che la sazia ;—*Parad.* 20.‡

the flight of the starlings and storks (*Inf.* 5, *Purg.* 24) ; the mournful cry and long line of the cranes

* And as with one accord, at break of day,
The rooks bestir themselves, by nature taught
To chase the dew-drops from their wings away ;
Some flying off, to reappear no more—
Others repairing to their nests again—
Some whirling round—then settling as before.—WRIGHT.

† What time the swallow pours her plaintive strain,
Saluting the approach of morning gray,
Thus haply mindful of her former pain.—IBID.

‡ E'en as the lark high soaring pours its throat
Awhile, then rests in silence, as though still
It dwelt enamour'd of its last sweet note.—IBID.

(*Inf.* 5, *Purg.* 26); the young birds trying to escape from the nest (*Purg.* 25); the eagle hanging in the sky:

Con l'ale aperte, e a calare intesa;—

the dove, standing close to its mate, or wheeling round it:

Sì come quando 'l *colombo si pone*
Presso al compagno, l' uno e l' altro pande
Girando e mormorando l' affezione;—*Parad.* 25.*

or the flock of pigeons, feeding:

Adunati alla pastura,
Queti, *senza mostrar l' usato orgoglio.*—*Purg.* 2.

Hawking supplies its images: the falcon coming for its food:

Il falcon che prima a piè si mira,
Indi si volge al grido, e si protende,
Per lo disio del pasto, che là il tira;—*Purg.* 19.†

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* As when unto his partner's side, the dove
Approaches near—both fondly circling round,
And cooing, show the fervour of their love;
So these great heirs of immortality
Receive each other; while they joyful sound
The praises of the food they share on high.—WRIGHT.

† And, as a falcon, which first scans its feet,
Then turns him to the call, and forward flies,
In eagerness to catch the tempting meat.—IBID.

or just unhooded, pluming itself for its flight:

Quasi falcon, ch' esce del cappello,
Muove la testa, e con l' ale s' applaude,
Voglia mostrando, e facendosi bello;—*Parad.* 19.*

or returning without success, sullen and loath:

Come 'l falcon ch' è stato assai su l' ali,
Che senza veder logoro, o uccello,
Fa dire al falconiere: Oimè tu cali!
Discende lasso onde si muove snello
Per cento ruote, *e da lungi si pone*
Dal suo maestro, *disdegnoso e fello*.—*Inf.* 17. †

It is curious to observe him taking Virgil's similes, and altering them. When Virgil describes the throng of souls, he compares them to falling leaves, or gathering birds in autumn:

Quam multa in silvis auctumni frigore primo
Lapsa cadunt folia, aut ad terram gurgite ab alto
Quam multæ glomerantur aves, ubi frigidus annus
Trans pontum fugat, et terris immittit apricis—

Dante uses the same images, but without copying:

Come d' Autunno si levan le foglie,
L' una appresso dell' altra, infin che 'l ramo

Lo, as a falcon, from the hood released,
Uplifts his head, and joyous flaps his wings,
His beauty and his eagerness increased.—WRIGHT.

† E'en as a falcon, long upheld in air,
Not seeing lure or bird upon the wing,
So that the falconer utters in despair
"Alas, thou stoop'st!" fatigued descends from high;
And whirling quickly round in many a ring,
Far from his master sits—disdainfully.—IDEM.

Rende alla terra tutte le sue spoglie ;
Similemente il mal seme d' Adamo :
Gittansi di quel lito ad una ad una
Per cenni, com' augel per suo richiamo.
Così sen vanno su per l' onda bruna,
Ed avanti che sien di là discese,
Anche di qua nuova schiera s' aduna.—*Inf.* 3.

Again—compared with one of Virgil's most highly-finished and perfect pictures, the flight of the pigeon, disturbed at first, and then becoming swift and smooth :

Qualis spelunca subito commota columba,
Cui domus et dulces latebroso in pumice nidi,
Fertur in arva volans, plausumque exterrita pennis
Dat tecto ingentem, mox aere lapsa quieto
Radit iter liquidum, celeres neque commovet alas—

the Italian's simplicity and strength may balance the "ornata parola" of Virgil :

Quali colombe dal disio chiamate,
Con *l' ali aperte e ferme* al dolce nido
Volan per l' aer dal voler portate.—*Inf.* 5.†

* As leaves in autumn, borne before the wind,
Drop one by one, until the branch laid bare,
Sees all its honours to the earth consign'd :
So cast them downward at his summons all
The guilty race of Adam from that strand—
Each as a falcon answering to the call.—WRIGHT.

† As doves, by strong affection urged, repair
With firm expanded wings to their sweet nest,
Borne by the impulse of their will through air.—IBID.

It is impossible not to be reminded at every step, in spite of the knowledge and taste which Mr. Cary and Mr. Wright have brought to

Take, again, the *times of the day*, with what is characteristic of them—appearances, lights, feelings—seldom dwelt on at length, but carried at once to the mind, and stamped upon it sometimes by a single word. The sense of *morning*, its inspiring and cheering strength, softens the opening of the *Inferno*; breathes its refreshing calm, in the interval of repose after the last horrors of hell, in the first canto of the *Purgatorio*; and prepares for the entrance into the earthly Paradise at its close. In the waning light of *evening*, and its chilling sense of loneliness, he prepared himself for his dread pilgrimage:

> Lo giorno se n' andava, e l' aer bruno
> Toglieva gli animai che sono 'n terra
> Dalle fatiche loro; ed io sol uno
> M' apparechiava a sostener la guerra
> Sì del cammino, e sì della pietate.—*Inf.* 2.

their most difficult task, of the truth which Dante has expressed with his ordinary positiveness.

He is saying that he does not wish his Canzoni to be explained in Latin to those who could not read them in Italian: "Che sarebbe sposta la loro sentenzia colà dove elle *non la potessono colla loro bellezza portare.* E però sappia ciascuno che nulla cosa per legame musaico (*i.e.* poetico) armonizzata, si può della sua loquela in altra trasmutare senza rompere tutta la sua dolcezza e armonia. E questa è la ragione per che Omero non sì mutò mai di Greco in Latino, come l' altre scritture che avemo da loro.—*Convito*, i. c. 8, p. 49.

Dr. Carlyle has given up the idea of attempting to represent Dante's verse by English verse, and has confined himself to assisting Englishmen to read him in his own language. His prose translation is accurate and forcible. And he has added sensible and useful notes.

Indeed there is scarcely an hour of day or night, which has not left its own recollection with him;—of which we cannot find some memorial in his poem. Evening and night have many. Evening, with its softness and melancholy—its exhaustion and languor, after the work, perhaps unfulfilled, of day—its regrets and yearnings—its sounds and doubtful lights—the distant bell, the closing chants of Compline, the *Salve Regina*, the *Te lucis ante terminum*—with its insecurity, and its sense of protection from above—broods over the poet's first resting-place on his heavenly road—that still, solemn, dreamy scene—the Valley of Flowers in the mountain side, where those who have been negligent about their salvation, but not altogether faithless and fruitless, the assembled shades of great kings and of poets, wait, looking upwards, "pale and humble," for the hour when they may begin in earnest their penance. (*Purg.* 7 and 8.) The level, blinding evening beams (*Purg.* 15); the contrast of gathering darkness in the valley or on the shore with the lingering lights on the mountain (*Purg.* 17); the rapid sinking of the sun, and approach of night in the south (*Purg.* 27); the flaming sunset clouds of August; the sheet-lightning of summer (*Purg.* 5); have left pictures in his mind, which an incidental touch reawakens, and a few strong words are sufficient to express. Other appearances he

describes with more fulness. The stars coming out one by one, baffling at first the eye:

Ed ecco intorno di chiarezza pari
Nascer un lustro sopra quel che v' era,
A guisa d' orizzonte, che rischiari.
E sì come al salir di prima sera
Comincian per lo Ciel nuove parvenze,
Sì che la cosa pare e non par vera;—*Parad.* 14.*

or else, bursting out suddenly over the heavens:

Quando colui che tutto il mondo allume,
Del' emisperio nostro si discende,
E 'l giorno d' ogni parte si consuma;
Lo ciel che sol di lui prima s' accende,
Subitamente si rifà parvente
Per molte luci in che una risplende;—*Parad.* 20.†

or the effect of shooting-stars:

Quale per li seren tranquilli e puri
Discorre ad ora ad or subito fuoco
Movendo gli occhi che stavan sicuri,
E pare stella che tramuti loco,

* And lo, on high, and lurid as the one
Now there, encircling it, a light arose,
Like heaven when re-illumined by the sun:
And as at the first lighting up of eve
The sky doth new appearances disclose,
That now seem real, now the sight deceive.—WRIGHT.

† When he, who with his universal ray
The world illumines, quits our hemisphere,
And, from each quarter, daylight wears away;
The heaven, erst kindled by his beam alone,
Sudden its lost effulgence doth repair
By many lights illumined but by one.—IBID.

Se non che dalla parte onde s' accende
Nulla sen perde, ed esso dura poco ;—*Parad.* 15.*

or, again, that characteristic sight of the Italian summer night—the fire-flies :

Quante il villan che al poggio si riposa,
Nel tempo che colui che 'l mondo schiara
La faccia sua a noi tien men ascosa,
Come la mosca cede alla zenzara,
Vede lucciole giù per la vallea
Forse colà dove vendemmia ed ara.—*Inf.* 26.†

Noon, too, does not want its characteristic touches —the lightning-like glancing of the lizard's rapid motion :

Come il ramarro sotto la gran fersa
Ne' dì canicular cangiando siepe
Folgore par, se la via attraversa ;—*Inf.* 25.‡

the motes in the sunbeam at noontide (*Par.* 14); its

* As oft along the pure and tranquil sky
A sudden fire by night is seen to dart,
Attracting forcibly the heedless eye ;
And seems to be a star that changes place,
Save that no star is lost from out the part
It quits, and that it lasts a moment's space.—WRIGHT.

† As in that season when the sun least veils
His face that lightens all, what time the fly
Gives place to the shrill gnat, the peasant then,
Upon some cliff reclined, beneath him sees
Fire-flies innumerous spangling o'er the vale,
Vineyard or tilth, where his day-labour lies.—CARY.

‡ As underneath the dog-star's scorching ray
The lizard, darting swift from fence to fence,
Appears like lightning, if he cross the way.—WRIGHT.

clear, diffused, insupportable brightness, filling all things:

> E tutti eran già pieni
> Dell' alto dì i giron del sacro monte.—*Purg.* 19.

and veiling the sun in his own light:

> Io veggio ben sì come *tu t' annidi*
> *Nel proprio lume.*
> * * * *
> Sì come 'l sol che si cela egli stessi
> Per troppa luce, quando 'l caldo ha rose
> Le temperanze de' vapori spessi.—*Parad.* 5.

But the sights and feelings of morning are what he touches on most frequently; and he does so with the precision of one who had watched them with often-repeated delight: the scented freshness of the breeze that stirs before daybreak:

> E quale annunziatrice degli albori
> Aura di maggio muovesi ed olezza
> Tutta impregnata dall' erba e da' fiori;
> Tal mi sentì' un vento dar per mezza
> La fronte;—*Purg.* 24.*

the chill of early morning (*Purg.* 19); the dawn stealing on, and the stars, one by one, fading "infino

* As when, announcing the approach of day,
Impregnated with herbs and flowers of Spring,
Breathes fresh and redolent the air of May—
Such was the breeze that gently fann'd my head;
And I perceived the waving of a wing
Which all around ambrosial odours shed.—WRIGHT.

alla più bella" (*Parad.* 30); the brightness of the "trembling morning star"—

Par tremolando mattutina stella ;—

the serenity of the dawn, the blue gradually gathering in the east, spreading over the brightening sky (*Parad.* 1); then succeeded by the orange tints—and Mars setting red, through the mist over the sea:

Ed ecco, qual sul presso del mattino
Per li grossi vapor Marte rosseggia
Giù nel ponente, sopra 'l suol marino,
Cotal m' apparve, s' io ancor lo veggia,
Un lume per lo mar venir si ratto
Che 'l muover suo nessun volar pareggia ;—*Purg.* 2.*

the distant sea-beach quivering in the early light:

L' alba vinceva l' ora mattutina
Che fuggia innanzi, sì che di lontano
Conobbi *il tremolar della marina* ;—*Purg.* 1.†

the contrast of east and west at the moment of sunrise, and the sun appearing, clothed in mist:

Io vidi già nel cominciar del giorno
La parte oriental tutta rosata

* When lo! like Mars, in aspect fiery red
Seen through the vapour, when the morn is nigh
Far in the west above the briny bed,
So (might I once more see it) o'er the sea
A light approach'd with such rapidity,
Flies not the bird that might its equal be.—WRIGHT.

† Now 'gan the vanquish'd matin hour to flee ;
And seen from far, as onward came the day,
I recognised the trembling of the sea.—IBID.

E l' altro ciel di bel sereno adorno ;
E la faccia del sol nascere ombrata
Sì che per temperanza di vapori
L' occhio lo sostenea lungo fiato ;—*Purg.* 3.*

or breaking through it, and shooting his beams over the sky :

Di tutte parti saettava il giorno
Lo sol ch' avea con le saette conte
Di mezzo 'l ciel cacciato 'l Capricorno.—*Purg.* 2.†

But *light* in general is his special and chosen source of poetic beauty. No poet that we know has shown such singular sensibility to its varied appearances—has shown that he felt it in itself the cause of a distinct and peculiar pleasure, delighting the eye apart from form, as music delights the ear apart from words, and capable, like music, of definite character, of endless variety, and infinite meanings. He must have studied and dwelt upon it like music. His mind is charged with its effects and combinations, and they are rendered with a force, a brevity, a precision, a

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Erewhile the eastern regions have I seen
At daybreak glow with roseate colours, and
The expanse beside all beauteous and serene :
And the sun's face so shrouded at its rise,
And temper'd by the mists which overhung,
That I could gaze on it with stedfast eyes.—WRIGHT.

On every side the sun shot forth the day,
And had already with his arrows bright
From the mid-heaven chased Capricorn away.—IBID.

heedlessness and unconsciousness of ornament, an indifference to circumstance and detail; they flash out with a spontaneous readiness, a suitableness and felicity, which show the familiarity and grasp given only by daily observation, daily thought, daily pleasure. Light everywhere—in the sky and earth and sea—in the star, the flame, the lamp, the gem—broken in the water, reflected from the mirror, transmitted pure through the glass, or coloured through the edge of the fractured emerald—dimmed in the mist, the halo, the deep water—streaming through the rent cloud, glowing in the coal, quivering in the lightning, flashing in the topaz and the ruby, veiled behind the pure alabaster, mellowed and clouding itself in the pearl—light contrasted with shadow—shading off and copying itself in the double rainbow, like voice and echo—light seen within light, as voice discerned within voice, "*quando una è ferma, e l' altra va e riede*"—the brighter "nestling" itself in the fainter—the purer set off on the less clear, "*come perla in bianca fronte*"—light in the human eye and face, displaying, figuring, and confounded with its expressions—light blended with joy in the eye:

luce
Come letizia in pupilla viva;

and in the smile:

Vincendo me col lume d' un sorriso;

joy lending its expression to light:

> Quivi la donna mia vidi si lieta—
> Che più lucente se ne fè il pianeta.
> E se la *stella si cambio, e rise,*
> Qual mi fec' io ;—*Parad.* 5.

light from every source, and in all its shapes, illuminates, irradiates, gives its glory to the *Commedia.* The remembrance of our "serene life" beneath the "fair stars" keeps up continually the gloom of the *Inferno.* Light, such as we see it and recognise it, the light of morning and evening growing and fading, takes off from the unearthliness of the *Purgatorio*; peopled, as it is, by the undying, who, though suffering for sin, can sin no more, it is thus made like our familiar world, made to touch our sympathies as an image of our own purification in the flesh. And when he rises beyond the regions of earthly day, light, simple, unalloyed, unshadowed, eternal, lifts the creations of his thought above all affinity to time and matter; light never fails him, as the expression of the gradations of bliss; never reappears the same, never refuses the new shapes of his invention, never becomes confused or dim, though it is seldom thrown into distinct figure, and still more seldom *coloured.* Only once, that we remember, is the thought of colour forced on us; when the bright joy of heaven suffers

change and eclipse, and deepens into red at the sacrilege of men.*

Yet his eye is everywhere, not confined to the beauty or character of the sky and its lights. His range of observation and largeness of interest prevent that line of imagery, which is his peculiar instrument and predilection, from becoming, in spite of its brightness and variety, dreamy and monotonous; prevent it from arming against itself sympathies which it does not touch. He has watched with equal attention, and draws with not less power, the occurrences and sights of Italian country life; the summer whirlwind sweeping over the plain—"*dinanzi polveroso va superbo*" (*Inf.* 9); the rain-storm of the Apennines (*Purg.* 5); the peasant's alternations of feeling in spring:

In quella parte del giovinetto anno
Che 'l sole i crin sotto l' Aquario tempra,
E già le notti al mezzo dì sen vanno;
Quando la brina in su la terra assempra
L' imagine di sua sorella bianca,
Ma poco dura alla sua penna tempra,
Lo villanello a cui la roba manca
Si leva e guarda, e vede la campagna
Biancheggiar tutta; ond 'ei si batte l' anca;
Ritorna a casa, e qua e là si lagna
Come 'l tapin che non sa che si faccia:
Poi riede e la speranza ringavagna

* *Parad.* 27.

Veggendo 'l mondo aver cangiata faccia
In poco d' ora, e prende il suo vincastro
E fuor le pecorelle a pascer caccia :—*Inf.* 24.*

the manner in which sheep come out from the fold :

Come le pecorelle escon del chiuso
A una a due a tre, e l' altre stanno,
Timidette atterrando l' occhio e' l muso ;
E ciò che fa la prima, e l' altre fanno,
Addossandosi a lei s' ella s' arresta
Semplici e quete, e lo 'mperchè non sanno :
Si vid' io muover a venir la testa
Di quella mandria fortunata allotta,
Pudica in faccia e nell' andare onesta.
Come color dinanzi vider rotta
La luce . . . . . .
Ristaro, e trasser se indietro alquanto,
E tutti gli altri che veniano appresso,
Non sappiendo il perchè, fero altrettanto.—*Purg.* 3.

So with the beautiful picture of the goats upon the mountain, chewing the cud in the noontide heat

* In the new year, when Sol his tresses gay
Dips in Aquarius, and the tardy night
Divides her empire with the lengthening day—
When o'er the earth the hoar-frost pure and bright
Assumes the image of her sister white,
Then quickly melts before the genial light—
The rustic, now exhausted his supply,
Rises betimes—looks out—and sees the land
All white around, whereat he strikes his thigh—
Turns back—and grieving—wanders here and there,
Like one disconsolate and at a stand ;
Then issues forth, forgetting his despair,
For lo ! the face of nature he beholds
Changed on a sudden—takes his crook again,
And drives his flock to pasture from the folds.—WRIGHT.

and stillness, and the goatherd, resting on his staff and watching them—a picture which no traveller among the mountains of Italy or Greece can have missed, or have forgotten :

> Quali si fanno ruminando manse
> Le capre, *state rapide e proterve*
> *Sopra le cime* avanti che sien pranse,
> *Tacite al ombra mentre che 'l sol ferve,*
> *Guardate dal pastor* che 'n su la verga
> Poggiato s' è, e lor poggiato serve.—*Purg.* 27.*

So again, with his recollections of cities : the crowd, running together to hear news (*Purg.* 2), or pressing after the winner of the game (*Purg.* 6) ; the blind men at the church doors, or following their guide through the throng (*Purg.* 13, 16) ; the friars walking along in silence, one behind another :

> Taciti, soli, e senza compagnia
> N' andavam, *l' un dinanzi, e l' altro dopo*
> *Come i frati minor vanno per via.—Inf.* 23.

He turns to account in his poem, the pomp and clamour of the host taking the field (*Inf.* 22) ; the devices of heraldry ; the answering chimes of morning

* Like goats that having over the crags pursued
Their wanton sports, now, quiet pass the time
In ruminating—sated with their food,
Beneath the shade, while glows the sun on high—
Watched by the goatherd with unceasing care,
As on his staff he leans, with watchful eye.—*Ibid.*

bells over the city;* the inventions and appliances of art, the wheels within wheels of clocks (*Par.* 24), the many-coloured carpets of the East (*Inf.* 17); music and dancing—the organ and voice in church:

—Voce mista al dolce suono
Che or sì or no s' intendon le parole,—*Purg.* 9.

the lute and voice in the chamber (*Par.* 20); the dancers preparing to begin,† or waiting to catch a new strain.‡ Or, again, the images of domestic life, the mother's ways to her child, reserved and reproving —"che al figlio par superba"—or cheering him with her voice, or watching him compassionately in the wandering of fever:

Ond' ella, appresso d' un pio sospiro
Gli occhi drizzò ver me, con quel sembiante
Che madre fa sopra figliuol deliro.—*Parad.* 1.

* Indi come orologio che ne chiami
Nell' ora che la sposa di Dio surge
A mattinar lo sposo perchè l' ami,
Che l' una parte e l' altra tira ed urge
Tin tin sonando con sì dolce nota
Che 'l ben disposto spirto d' amor turge;
Così vid' io la gloriosa ruota
Muoversi e render voce a voce, in tempra
Ed in dolcezza ch' esser non può nota
Se non colà dove 'l gioir s' insempra.—*Parad.* 10.

† E come surge, e va, ed entra in ballo
Vergine lieta, sol per farne onore
Alla novizia, e non per alcun fallo.—*Ibid.* 25.

‡ Donne mi parver, non da ballo sciolte,
Ma che s' arrestin tacite ascoltando
Fin che le nuove note hanno ricolte.—*Ibid.* 10.

Nor is he less observant of the more delicate phenomena of mind, in its inward workings, and its connexion with the body. The play of features, the involuntary gestures and attitudes of the passions, the power of eye over eye, of hand upon hand, the charm of voice and expression, of musical sounds even when not understood—feelings, sensations, and states of mind which have a name, and others, equally numerous and equally common, which have none—these, often so fugitive, so shifting, so baffling and intangible, are expressed with a directness, a simplicity, a sense of truth at once broad and refined, which seized at once on the congenial mind of his countrymen, and pointed out to them the road which they have followed in art, unapproached as yet by any competitors.*

* For instance :—*thoughts upon thoughts, ending in sleep and dreams:*

Nuovo pensier dentro de me si mise,
Dal qual più altri nacquero e diversi:
E tanto d' uno in altro vaneggiai
Che gli occhi per vaghezza ricopersi,
E 'l pensamento in sogno trasmutai.—*Purg.* 18.

sleep stealing off when broken by light:

Come si frange il sonno, ove di butto
Nuova luce percuote 'l viso chiuso,
Che fratto guizza pria che muoja tutto.—*Ibid.* 17

the shock of sudden awakening:

Come al lume acuto si disonna,
* * * *
E lo svegliato ciò che vede abborre,

And he has anticipated the latest schools of modern poetry, by making not merely nature, but

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Sì nescia è la subita vigilia,
Finchè la stimativa nol soccorre.—*Parad.* 26.

uneasy feelings produced by sight or representation of something unnatural:

Come per sostentar solajo o tetto
Per mensola talvolta una figura
Si vede giunger le ginocchia al petto,
La qual fa del non ver vera rancura
Nascer a chi la vede; così fatti
Vid' io color.—*Purg.* 10.

blushing in innocent sympathy for others:

E come donna onesta che permane
Di se sicura, e *per l' altrui fallenza*
Pure ascoltando timida si fane:
Così Beatrice trasmutò sembianza.—*Ibid.* 27.

asking and answering by looks only:

Volsi gli occhi agli occhi al signor mio;
Ond' elli m' assentì con lieto cenno
Ciò che chiedea la vista del disio.—*Purg.* 19.

watching the effect of words:

Posto avea fine al suo ragionamento
L' alto dottore, ad attento guardava
Nella mia vista s' io parea contento.
Ed io, cui nuova sete ancor frugava,
Di fuor taceva e dentro dicea: forse
Lo troppo dimandar ch' io fo, li grava.
Ma quel padre verace, che s' accorse
Del timido voler che non s' apriva,
Parlando, di parlare ardir mi porse.—*Ibid.* 18.

Dante betraying Virgil's presence to Statius, by his involuntary smile:

Volser Virgilio a me queste parole
Con viso che tacendo dicea: "taci;"
Ma non può tutto la virtù che vuole;
Che riso e pianto son tanto seguaci
Alla passion da che ciascun si spicca,
Che men seguon voler ne' più veraci.

science tributary to a poetry with whose general aim and spirit it has little in common—tributary in its

Io pur sorrisi, come l' uom ch' ammicca :
Perchè l' ombra si tacque, e riguardommi
Negli occhi ove 'l sembiante più si ficca.
E se tanto lavoro in bene assommi,

Disse, perchè la faccia tua testeso
Un lampeggiar a' un riso dimostrommi?—*Purg.* 21.

smiles and words together :

Per le *sorrise parolette brevi.*—*Parad.* 1.

eye meeting eye :

Gli occhi ritorsi avanti
Dritti nel lume della dolce guida
Che sorridendo ardea negli occhi santi.—*Ibid.* 3.

Come si vede qui alcuna volta
L' affetto nella vista, s' ello è tanto
Che da lui sia tutta l' anima tolta :
Così nel fiammeggiar del fulgor santo
A cui mi volsi, conobbi la voglia
In lui di ragionarmi ancore alquanto.—*Ibid.* 18.

gentleness of voice :

E cominciommi a dir soave e piana
Con angelica voce in sua favella.—*Inf.* 2.

E come agli occhi miei si fe' più bella,
Così con voce più dolce e soave,
Ma non con questa moderna favella,
Dissemi ;—*Parad.* 16.

chanting :

Te lucis ante si divotamente
Le uscì di bocca e con si dolce note,
Che fece me a me uscir di mente.
E l' altre poi dolcemente e divote
Seguitar lei per tutto l' inno intero,
Avendo gli occhi alle superne ruote.—*Purg.* 8.

exact forms, even in its technicalities. He speaks of the Mediterranean Sea, not merely as a historian, or

chanting blended with the sound of the organ:

Io mi rivolsi attento al primo tuono,
E *Te Deùm laudamus* mi parea
Udire in voce mista al dolce suono.
Tale imagine appunto mi rendea
Ciò ch' io udiva, qual prender si suole
Quando a cantar con organi si stea;
Ch' or si, or no, s' intendon le parole.—*Purg.* 9.

voices in concert:

E come in voce voce si discerne
Quando una è ferma, e 'l altra va e riede.—*Parad.* 8.

attitudes and gestures: e.g. Beatrice addressing him,

Con atto e voce di spedito duce.—*Ibid.* 30.

Sordello eyeing the travellers:

Venimmo a lei: o anima Lombarda,
Come ti stavi altera e disdegnosa,
E nel muover degli occhi onesta e tarda.
Ella non ci diceva alcuna cosa,
Ma lasciavane gir, solo guardando,
A guisa di leon quando si posa.—*Purg.* 6.

the angel moving "dry-shod" over the Stygian pool:

Dal volto rimovea quell' aer grasso
Menando la sinistra innanzi spesso,
E sol di quell' angoscia parea lasso.
Ben m' accorsi ch' egli era del ciel messo,
E volsimi al maestro; e quei fe' segno
Ch' io stessi cheto ed inchinassi ed esso.
Ahi quanto mi parea pien di disdegno.

* * * *

Poi si rivolse per la strada lorda,
E non fe' motto a noi, ma fe, sembiante
D' uomo cui altra cura stringa e morde
Che quella di colui che gli è davante.—*Inf.* 9.

an observer of its storms or its smiles, but as a geologist;* of light, not merely in its beautiful appearances, but in its natural laws.† There is a charm, an imaginative charm to him, not merely in the sensible magnificence of the heavens, "in their silence, and light, and watchfulness," but in the system of Ptolemy and the theories of astrology; and he delights to interweave the poetry of feeling and of the outward sense with the grandeur—so far as he knew it—of order, proportion, measured magnitudes, the relations of abstract forces, displayed on such a scene as the material universe, as if he wished to show that imagination in its boldest flight was not afraid of the company of the clear and subtle intellect.

Indeed the real never daunts him. It is his leading principle of poetic composition, to draw out of things the poetry which is latent in them, either essentially, or as they are portions, images, or reflexes of something greater—not to invest them with a poetical semblance, by means of words which bring with them poetical associations, and have received a general poetical stamp. Dante has few of those indirect charms which flow from the subtle structure and refined graces of language—none of that exquisitely-fitted and self-sustained mechanism of choice

* *La maggior valle*, in che l' acqua si spandi.—*Parad.* 9.

† *E.g. Purg.* 15.

words of the Greeks—none of that tempered and majestic amplitude of diction, which clothes, like the folds of a royal robe, the thoughts of the Latins—none of that abundant play of fancy and sentiment, soft or grand, in which the later Italian poets delighted. Words with him are used sparingly, never in play—never because they carry with them poetical recollections—never for their own sake; but because they are instruments which will give the deepest, clearest, sharpest stamp of that image which the poet's mind, piercing to the very heart of his subject, or seizing the characteristic feature which to other men's eyes is confused and lost among others accidental and common, draws forth in severe and living truth. Words will not always bend themselves to his demands on them; they make him often uncouth, abrupt, obscure. But he is too much in earnest to heed uncouthness; and his power over language is too great to allow uncertainty as to what he means, to be other than occasional. Nor is he a stranger to the utmost sweetness and melody of language. But it appears, unsought for and unlaboured, the spontaneous and inevitable obedience of the tongue and pen to the impressions of the mind; as grace and beauty, of themselves, "command and guide the eye" of the painter, who thinks not of his hand but of them. All is in character with the absorbed and

serious earnestness which pervades the poem ; there is no toying, no ornament, that a man in earnest might not throw into his words ;—whether in single images, or in pictures, like that of the Meadow of the Heroes (*Inf.* 4), or the angel appearing in hell to guide the poet through the burning city (*Inf.* 9)—or in histories, like those of Count Ugolino, or the life of S. Francis (*Parad.* 11)—or in the dramatic scenes like the meeting of the poets Sordello and Virgil (*Purgat.* 6), or that one, unequalled in beauty, where Dante himself, after years of forgetfulness and sin, sees Beatrice in glory, and hears his name, never but once pronounced during the vision, from her lips.*

* Io vidi già nel cominciar del giorno
La parte oriental tutta rosata,
E l' altro ciel di bel sereno adorno,
E la faccia del sol nascere ombrata,
Sì che per temperanza di vapori
L' occhio lo sostenea lunga fiata ;
Così dentro una nuvola di fiori,
Che dalle mani angeliche saliva,
E ricadeva giù dentro e di fuori,
Sovra candido vel cinta d' oliva
Donna m' apparve sotto verde manto
Vestita di color di fiamma viva.
E lo spirito mio, che già cotanto
Tempo era stato che alla sua presenza
Non era di stupor, tremando, affranto.
Senza degli occhi aver più conoscenza,
Per occulta virtù, che da lei mosse,
D' antico amor sentì' la gran potenza.
* * * * *

But this, or any other array of scenes and images, might be matched from poets of a far lower order than Dante: and to specimens which might be brought together of his audacity and extravagance, no parallel could be found except among the lowest. We cannot, honestly, plead the barbarism of the time as his excuse. That, doubtless, contributed largely to them; but they were the faults of the man. In another age, their form might have been different; yet we cannot believe so much of time, that it would have tamed Dante. Nor can we wish it. It might have made him less great: and his greatness can well

"Volsimi alla sinistra col rispitto,
Col quale il fantolin corre alla mamma,
Quando ha paura, o quando egli è afflitto,
Per dicere a Virgilio: Men che dramma
Di sangue m' è rimasa, che non tremi:
Conosco i segni dell' antica fiamma.
Ma Virgilio n' avea lasciati scemi
Di se, Virgilio dolcissimo padre,
Virgilio, a cui per mia salute diemi:
* * * * *
Dante, perchè Virgilio se ne vada,
Non piangere anche, non piangere ancora
Che pianger ti convien per altra spada.
* * * * *
Regalmente nell' atto ancor proterva
Continuò, come colui che dice,
E il più caldo parlar diretro serva,
Guardami ben: ben son, ben son Beatrice:
Come degnasti d' accedere al monte?
Non sapei tu, che qui è l' uom felice?—*Purg.* 30.

But extracts can give but an imperfect notion of this grand and touching canto.

bear its own blemishes, and will not less meet its due honour among men, because they can detect its kindred to themselves.

The greatness of his work is not in its details—to be made or marred by them. It is the greatness of a comprehensive and vast conception, sustaining without failure the trial of its long and hazardous execution, and fulfilling at its close the hope and promise of its beginning; like the greatness—which we watch in its course with anxious suspense, and look back upon when it is secured by death, with deep admiration—of a perfect life. Many a surprise, many a difficulty, many a disappointment, many a strange reverse and alternation of feelings, attend the progress of the most patient and admiring reader of the *Commedia*; as many as attend on one who follows the unfolding of a strong character in life. We are often shocked when we were prepared to admire—repelled, when we came with sympathy; the accustomed key fails at a critical moment—depths are revealed which we cannot sound, mysteries which baffle and confound us. But the check is for a time—the gap and chasm does not dissever. Haste is even an evidence of life—the brief word, the obscure hint, the unexplained, the unfinished, or even the unachieved, are the marks of human feebleness, but are also among those of human truth. The unity of the whole is unimpaired.

The strength which is working it out, though it may have at times disappointed us, shows no hollowness or exhaustion. The surprise of disappointment is balanced—there is the surprise of unimagined excellence. Powers do more than they promised; and that spontaneous and living energy, without which neither man nor poet can be trusted, and which showed its strength even in its failures, shows it more abundantly in the novelties of success—by touching sympathies which have never been touched before, by the unconstrained freshness with which it meets the proverbial and familiar, by the freedom with which it adjusts itself to a new position or an altered task—by the completeness, unstudied and instinctive, with which it holds together dissimilar and uncongenial materials, and forces the most intractable, the most unaccustomed to submission, to receive the colour of the whole—by its orderly and unmistakable onward march, and its progress, as in height, so in what corresponds to height. It was one and the same man, who rose from the despair, the agony, the vivid and vulgar horrors of the *Inferno*, to the sense and imagination of certainty, sinlessness, and joy ineffable—the same man whose power and whose sympathies failed him not, whether discriminating and enumerating, as if he had gone through them all, the various forms of human suffering, from the dull,

gnawing sense of the loss of happiness, to the infinite woes of the wrecked and ruined spirit, and the coarser pangs of the material flesh; or dwelling on the changeful lights and shades of earnest repentance, in its hard, but not unaided or ungladdened struggle, and on that restoration to liberty and peace, which can change even this life into paradise, and reverse the doom which made sorrow our condition, and laughter and joy unnatural and dangerous—the penalty of that first fault, which

> In pianto ed in affanno
> Cambiò onesto riso e dolce giuoco;

or rising finally above mortal experience, to imagine the freedom of the saints and the peace of eternity. In this consists the greatness of his power. It is not necessary to read through the *Commedia* to see it—open it where we please, we see that he is on his way, and whither he is going; episode and digression share in the solemnity of the general order.

And his greatness was more than that of power. That reach and play of sympathy ministered to a noble wisdom, which used it thoughtfully and consciously for a purpose to which great poetry had never yet been applied, except in the mouth of prophets. Dante was a stern man, and more than stern, among his fellows. But he has left to those

who never saw his face an inheritance the most precious; he has left them that which, reflecting and interpreting their minds, does so, not to amuse, not to bewilder, not to warp, not to turn them in upon themselves in distress or gloom or selfishness; not merely to hold up a mirror to nature; but to make them true and make them hopeful. Dark as are his words of individuals, his thoughts are not dark or one-sided about mankind; his is no cherished and perverse severity—his faith is too large, too real, for such a fault. He did not write only the *Inferno*. And the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso* are not an afterthought, a feebler appendix and compensation, conceived when too late, to a finished whole, which has taken up into itself the poet's real mind. Nowhere else in poetry of equal power is there the same balanced view of what man is, and may be; nowhere so wide a grasp shown of his various capacities, so strong a desire to find a due place and function for all his various dispositions. Where he stands contrasted in his idea of human life with other poets, who have been more powerful exponents of its separate sides, is in his large and truthful comprehensiveness. Fresh from the thought of man's condition as a whole, fresh from the thought of his goodness, his greatness, his power, as well as of his

evil, his mind is equally in tune when rejoicing over his restoration, as when contemplating the ruins of his fall. He never lets go the recollection that human life, if it grovels at one end in corruption and sin, and has to pass through the sweat and dust and disfigurement of earthly toil, has throughout, compensations, remedies, functions, spheres innumerable of profitable activity, sources inexhaustible of delight and consolation—and at the other end a perfection which cannot be named. No one ever measured the greatness of man in all its forms with so true and yet with so admiring an eye, and with such glowing hope, as he who has also portrayed so awfully man's littleness and vileness. And he went farther—no one who could understand and do homage to greatness in man, ever drew the line so strongly between greatness and goodness, and so unhesitatingly placed the hero of this world only—placed him in all his magnificence, honoured with no timid or dissembling reverence—at the distance of worlds, below the place of the lowest saint.

Those who know the *Divina Commedia* best, will best know how hard it is to be the interpreter of such a mind; but they will sympathise with the wish to call attention to it. They know, and would wish others also to know, not by hearsay, but by

experience, the power of that wonderful poem. They know its austere, yet subduing beauty; they know what force there is, in its free and earnest and solemn verse, to strengthen, to tranquillise, to console. It is a small thing that it has the secret of Nature and Man; that a few keen words have opened their eyes to new sights in earth, and sea, and sky; have taught them new mysteries of sound; have made them recognise, in distinct image or thought, fugitive feelings, or their unheeded expression, by look, or gesture, or motion; that it has enriched the public and collective memory of society with new instances, never to be lost, of human feeling and fortune; has charmed ear and mind by the music of its stately march, and the variety and completeness of its plan. But, besides this, they know how often its seriousness has put to shame their trifling, its magnanimity their faint-heartedness, its living energy their indolence, its stern and sad grandeur rebuked low thoughts, its thrilling tenderness overcome sullenness and assuaged distress, its strong faith quelled despair and soothed perplexity, its vast grasp imparted the sense of harmony to the view of clashing truths. They know how often they have found, in times of trouble, if not light, at least that deep sense of reality, permanent, though unseen, which is more

than light can always give—in the view which it has suggested to them of the judgments and the love of God.*

* It is necessary to state, that these remarks were written before we had seen the chapter on Dante in "Italy, past and present, by L. Mariotti." Had we become acquainted with it earlier, we should have had to refer to it often, in the way of acknowledgment, and as often in the way of strong protest.

DE MONARCHIA.

DE MONARCHIA.

BOOK I.

I.—It very greatly concerns all men on whom a higher nature has impressed* the love of truth, that, as they have been enriched by the labour of those before them, so they also should labour for those that are to come after them, to the end that posterity may receive from them an addition to its wealth. For he is far astray from his duty—let him not doubt it—who, having been trained in the lessons of public business, cares not himself to contribute aught to the public good. He is no "tree planted by the water-side, that bringeth forth his fruit in due season." He is rather the devouring whirlpool, ever engulfing, but restoring nothing. Pondering, therefore, often on these things, lest some day I

* "*In quos veritatis amorem natura superior impressit.*" On the ancient idea (Aug. *De Trin.* iii. 4, 9 Aquin. *Summ.* 1, 66, 3) of the influence or impression of higher natures on lower, cf. *Parad.* i. 103, x. 29.

should have to answer the charge of the talent buried in the earth, I desire not only to show the budding promise, but also to bear fruit for the general good, and to set forth truths by others unattempted. For what fruit can he be said to bear who should go about to demonstrate again some theorem of Euclid? or when Aristotle has shown us what happiness is, should show it to us once more? or when Cicero has been the apologist of old age, should a second time undertake its defence? Such squandering of labour would only engender weariness and not profit.

But seeing that among other truths, ill-understood yet profitable, the knowledge touching temporal monarchy is at once most profitable and most obscure, and that because it has no immediate reference to worldly gain it is left unexplored by all, therefore it is my purpose to draw it forth from its hiding-places, as well that I may spend my toil for the benefit of the world, as that I may be the first to win the prize of so great an achievement to my own glory. The work indeed is difficult, and I am attempting what is beyond my strength; but I trust not in my own powers, but in the light of that Bountiful Giver, "Who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not."

II.—First, therefore, we must see what is it

that is called Temporal Monarchy, in its idea, so to speak, and according to its purpose. Temporal Monarchy, then, or, as men call it, the Empire, is the government of one prince above all men in time, or in those things and over those things which are measured by time. Three great questions are asked concerning it. First, there is the doubt and the question, is it necessary for the welfare of the world? Secondly, did the Roman people take to itself by right the office of Monarchy? And thirdly, does the authority of Monarchy come from God directly, or only from some other minister or vicar of God?

Now, since every truth, which is not itself a first principle, becomes manifest from the truth of some first principle, it is therefore necessary in every inquiry to have a knowledge of the first principle involved, to which by analysis we may go back for the certainty of all the propositions which are afterwards accepted. And since this treatise is an inquiry, we must begin by examining the first principle on the strength of which deductions are to rest. It must be understood then that there are certain things which, since they are not subject to our power, are matters of speculation, but not of action: such are Mathematics and Physics, and things divine. But there are some things which, since they are subject to our power, are matters of action as well as of speculation, and in them we

do not act for the sake of speculation, but contrariwise: for in such things action is the end. Now, since the matter which we have in hand has to do with states, nay, with the very origin and principle of good forms of government, and since all that concerns states is subject to our power, it is manifest that our subject is not in the first place speculation, but action. And again, since in matters of action the end sought is the first principle and cause of all (for that it is which first moves the agent to act), it follows that all our method concerning the means which are set to gain the end must be taken from the end. For there will be one way of cutting wood to build a house, and another to build a ship. That therefore, if it exists, which is the ultimate end for the universal civil order of mankind, will be the first principle from which all the truth of our future deductions will be sufficiently manifest. But it is folly to think that there is an end for this and for that particular civil order, and yet not one end for all.

III.—Now, therefore, we must see what is the end of the whole civil order of men; and when we have found this, then, as the Philosopher* says in his book to Nicomachus,† the half of our

* The common title for Aristotle from the first half of the thirteenth century. *Vide* Jourdain, *Recherches sur les traductions d'Aristote*, p. 212, note.

† Arist. *Ethics*, i. 7.

labour will have been accomplished. And to render the question clearer, we must observe that as there is a certain end for which nature makes the thumb, and another, different from this, for which she makes the whole hand, and again another for which she makes the arm, and another different from all for which she makes the whole man; so there is one end for which she orders the individual man, and another for which she orders the family, and another end for the city, and another for the kingdom, and finally an ultimate one for which the Everlasting God, by His art which is nature, brings into being the whole human race. And this is what we seek as a first principle to guide our whole inquiry.

Let it then be understood that God and nature make nothing to be idle. Whatever comes into being, exists for some operation or working. For no created essence is an ultimate end in the creator's purpose, so far as he is a creator, but rather the proper operation of that essence. Therefore it follows that the operation does not exist for the sake of the essence, but the essence for the sake of the operation.

There is therefore a certain proper operation of the whole body of human kind, for which this whole body of men in all its multitudes is ordered and constituted, but to which no one man, nor single family, nor single neighbourhood, nor single city, nor

particular kingdom can attain. What this is will be manifest, if we can find what is the final and characteristic capacity of humanity as a whole. I say then that no quality which is shared by different species of things is the distinguishing capacity of any one of them. For were it so, since this capacity is that which makes each species what it is, it would follow that one essence would be specifically distributed to many species, which is impossible. Therefore the ultimate quality of men is not existence, taken simply; for the elements share therein. Nor is it existence under certain conditions;* for we find this in minerals too. Nor is it existence with life; for plants too have life. Nor is it percipient existence; for brutes share in this power. It is to be percipient† with the possibility of understanding, for this quality falls to the lot of none but man, either above or below him. For though there are other beings which with him have understanding, yet this understanding is not, as man's, capable of development. For such beings are only certain intellectual natures, and not anything besides, and their being is nothing other than to understand; which is without interruption, otherwise they would not be eternal. It is plain, therefore, that the dis-

* "*Esse complexionatum.*"

† "*Apprehensivum per intellectum possibilem.*" *V. Aquin.* I. 79. 1, 2, 10.

tinguishing quality of humanity is the faculty or the power of understanding.

And because this faculty cannot be realised in act in its entirety at one time by a single man, nor by any of the individual societies which we have marked, therefore there must be multitude in the human race, in order to realise it: just as it is necessary that there should be a multitude of things which can be brought into being,* so that the capacity of the primal matter for being acted on may be ever open to what acts on it. For if this were not so, we could speak of a capacity apart from its substance, which is impossible. And with this opinion Averroes, in his comment on [Aristotle's] treatise on the Soul, agrees. For the capacity for understanding, of which I speak, is concerned not only with universal forms or species, but also, by a kind of extension, with particular ones. Therefore it is commonly said that the speculative understanding becomes practical by extension; and then its end is to do and to make. This I say in reference to things which may be *done*, which are regulated by political wisdom, and in reference to things which may be *made*, which are regulated by art; all which things wait as handmaidens on the speculative in-

* "*Generabilium.*"

tellect, as on that best good, for which the Primal Goodness created the human race. Hence the saying of the Politics* that those who are strong in understanding are the natural rulers of others.

IV.—It has thus been sufficiently set forth that the proper work of the human race, taken as a whole, is to set in action the whole capacity of that understanding which is capable of development: first in the way of speculation, and then, by its extension, in the way of action. And seeing that what is true of a part is true also of the whole, and that it is by rest and quiet that the individual man becomes perfect in wisdom and prudence; so the human race, by living in the calm and tranquillity of peace, applies itself most freely and easily to its proper work; a work which, according to the saying; "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels," is almost divine. Whence it is manifest that of all things that are ordered to secure blessings to men, peace is the best. And hence the word which sounded to the shepherds from above. was not riches, nor pleasure, nor honour, nor length of life, nor health, nor strength, nor beauty; but peace. For the heavenly Host said: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace to men of goodwill." Therefore also, "Peace be with you," was the saluta-

* Arist. *Polit.* i. 5, 6.—(W.)

tion of the Saviour of mankind. For it behoved Him, who was the greatest of saviours, to utter in His greeting the greatest of saving blessings. And this custom His disciples too chose to preserve; and Paul also did the same in his greetings, as may appear manifest to all.

Now that we have declared these matters, it is plain what is the better, nay the best, way in which mankind may attain to do its proper work. And consequently we have seen the readiest means by which to arrive at the point, for which all our works are ordered, as their ultimate end; namely, the universal peace, which is to be assumed as the first principle for our deductions. As we said, this assumption was necessary, for it is as a sign-post to us, that into it we may resolve all that has to be proved, as into a most manifest truth.

V.—As therefore we have already said, there are three doubts, and these doubts suggest three questions, concerning Temporal Monarchy, which in more common speech is called the Empire; and our purpose is, as we explained, to inquire concerning these questions in their given order, and starting from the first principle which we have just laid down. The first question, then, is whether Temporal Monarchy is necessary for the welfare of the world; and that it is necessary can, I think, be shown by the strongest and most

manifest arguments; for nothing, either of reason or of authority, opposes me. Let us first take the authority of the Philosopher in his Politics.* There, on his venerable authority, it is said that where a number of things are arranged to attain an end, it behoves one of them to regulate or govern the others, and the others to submit. And it is not only the authority of his illustrious name which makes this worthy of belief, but also reason, instancing particulars.

If we take the case of a single man, we shall see the same rule manifested in him: all his powers are ordered to gain happiness; but his understanding is what regulates and governs all the others; and otherwise he would never attain to happiness. Again, take a single household: its end is to fit the members thereof to live well; but there must be one to regulate and rule it, who is called the father of the family, or, it may be, one who holds his office. As the Philosopher says: "Every house is ruled by the oldest."† And, as Homer says, it is his duty to make rules and laws for the rest. Hence the proverbial curse: "Mayst thou have an equal at home."‡ Take a single village: its end is suitable assistance as regards persons and

* Arist. *Polit.* i. 5.

† *Ibid.* i. 2, 6, quoting Hom. *Od.* ix. 114.—(W.)

‡ Ficinus translates: "Uno proverbio che quasi bestemmiando dice, *Abbi pari in casa.*"

goods, but one in it must be the ruler of the rest, either set over them by another, or with their consent, the head man amongst them. If it be not so, not only do its inhabitants fail of this mutual assistance, but the whole neighbourhood is sometimes wholly ruined by the ambition of many, who each of them wish to rule. If, again, we take a single city: its end is to secure a good and sufficient life to the citizens; but one man must be ruler in imperfect* as well as in good forms of the state. If it is otherwise, not only is the end of civil life lost, but the city too ceases to be what it was. Lastly, if we take any one kingdom, of which the end is the same as that of a city, only with greater security for its tranquillity, there must be one king to rule and govern. For if this is not so, not only do his subjects miss their end, but the kingdom itself falls to destruction, according to that word of the infallible truth: "Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation." If then this holds good in these cases, and in each individual thing which is ordered to one certain end, what we have laid down is true.

Now it is plain that the whole human race is ordered to gain some end, as has been before shown. There must, therefore, be one to guide and govern,

* "*Obliqua*" = παρεκβάσεις. *V.* Arist. *Eth.* viii. 10; *Pol.* iii. 7.—(W.)

and the proper title for this office is Monarch or Emperor. And so it is plain that Monarchy or the Empire is necessary for the welfare of the world.

VI.—And as the part is to the whole, so is the order of parts to the order of the whole. The part is to the whole, as to an end and highest good which is aimed at; and, therefore, the order in the parts is to the order in the whole, as it is to the end and highest good aimed at. Hence we have it that the goodness of the order of parts does not exceed the goodness of the order of the whole, but that the converse of this is true. Therefore we find a double order in the world, namely, the order of parts in relation to each other, and their order in relation to some one thing which is not a part (as there is in the order of the parts of an army in relation to each other, and then in relation to the general); and the order of the parts in relation to the one thing which is not a part is the higher, for it is the end of the other order, and the other exists for the sake of it. Therefore, if the form of this order is found in the units of the mass of mankind, much more may we argue by our syllogism that it is found in mankind considered as a whole; for this latter order, or its form, is better. But as was said in the preceding chapter, and it is sufficiently plain, this order is found in all the units of the mass of mankind. Therefore it is, or should be, found in

the mass considered as a whole. And therefore all the parts that we have mentioned, which are comprised in kingdoms, and the kingdoms themselves ought to be ordered with reference to one Prince or Princedom, that is, with reference to a Monarch or Monarchy.

VII.—Further, the whole human race is a whole with reference to certain parts, and, with reference to another whole, it is a part. For it is a whole with reference to particular kingdoms and nations, as we have shown; and it is a part with reference to the whole universe, as is manifest without argument. Therefore, as the lower portions of the whole system of humanity are well adapted to that whole, so that whole is said to be well adapted to the whole which is above it. It is only under the rule of one prince that the parts of humanity are well adapted to their whole, as may easily be collected from what we have said; therefore it is only by being under one Princedom, or the rule of a single Prince, that humanity as a whole is well adapted to the Universe, or its Prince, who is the One God. And it therefore follows that Monarchy is necessary for the welfare of the world.

VIII.—And all is well and at its best which exists according to the will of the first agent, who is God. This is self-evident, except to those who deny that the divine goodness attains to absolute perfection.

Now, it is the intention of God that all created things should represent the likeness of God, so far as their proper nature will admit. Therefore was it said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." And though it could not be said that the lower part of creation was made in the image of God, yet all things may be said to be after His likeness, for what is the whole universe but the footprint of the divine goodness? The human race, therefore, is well, nay at its best state, when, so far as can be, it is made like unto God. But the human race is then most made like unto God when most it is one; for the true principle of oneness is in Him alone. Wherefore it is written: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord thy God is one God." But the race of man is most one when it is united wholly in one body, and it is evident that this cannot be, except when it is subject to one prince. Therefore in this subjection mankind is most made like unto God, and, in consequence, such a subjection is in accordance with the divine intention, and it is indeed well and best for man when this is so, as we showed at the beginning of this chapter.

IX.—Again, things are well and at their best with every son when he follows, so far as by his proper nature he can, the footsteps of a perfect father. Mankind is the son of heaven, which is most perfect in all its works; for it is "man and the sun which produce man," accord-

ing to the second book on Natural Learning.* The human race, therefore, is at its best when it imitates the movements of heaven, so far as human nature allows. And since the whole heaven is regulated with one motion, to wit, that of the *primum mobile*, and by one mover, who is God, in all its parts, movements, and movers (and this human reason readily seizes from science); therefore, if our argument be correct, the human race is at its best state when, both in its movements, and in regard to those who move it, it is regulated by a single Prince, as by the single movement of heaven, and by one law, as by the single motion. Therefore it is evidently necessary for the welfare of the world for there to be a Monarchy, or single Princedom, which men call the Empire. And this thought did Boethius breathe when he said: "Oh happy race of men, if your hearts are ruled by the love which rules the heaven."†

X.—Wherever there is controversy, there ought to be judgment, otherwise there would be imperfection without its proper remedy,‡ which is impossible; for God and Nature, in things necessary, do not fail in their provisions. But it is manifest that there may be controversy between any two princes, where the

* Arist. *Phys. Ausc.* ii. 2.—(W.) † *De Consol. Phil.* ii. met. 8.—(W.)
‡ "*Sine proprio perfectivo.*"

one is not subject to the other, either from the fault of themselves, or even of their subjects. Therefore between them there should be means of judgment. And since, when one is not subject to the other, he cannot be judged by the other (for there is no rule of equals over equals), there must be a third prince of wider jurisdiction, within the circle of whose laws both may come. Either he will or he will not be a Monarch. If he is, we have what we sought; if not, then this one again will have an equal, who is not subject to his jurisdiction, and then again we have need of a third. And so we must either go on to infinity, which is impossible, or we must come to that judge who is first and highest; by whose judgment all controversies shall be either directly or indirectly decided; and he will be Monarch or Emperor. Monarchy is therefore necessary to the world, and this the Philosopher saw when he said: "The world is not intended to be disposed in evil order; 'in a multitude of rulers there is evil, therefore let there be one prince.'"*

XI.—Further, the world is ordered best when justice is most paramount therein: whence Virgil, wishing to celebrate that age, which in his own time seemed to be arising, sang in his *Bucolics*:† "Now

* Arist. *Metaphys.* xii. 10, who quotes from Hom. *Il.* ii. 204.—(W.)

† *Ecl.* iv. 6.

doth the Virgin return, and the kingdom of Saturn." For Justice was named "the Virgin," and also Astræa. The kingdom of Saturn was the good time, which they also called the Golden Age. But Justice is paramount only in a Monarchy, and therefore a Monarchy, that is, the Empire, is needed if the world is to be ordered for the best. For better proof of this assumption it must be recognised that Justice, considered in itself, and in its proper nature, is a certain rightness or rule of conduct, which rejects on either side all that deviates from it. It is like whiteness considered as an abstraction, not admitting of degrees. For there are certain forms of this sort which belong to things compounded, and exist themselves in a simple and unchanging essence, as * the Master of the Six Principles rightly says. Yet qualities of this sort admit of degrees on the part of their subjects with which they are connected, according as in their subjects more or less of their contraries is mingled. Justice, therefore, is strongest in man, both as a state of mind and in practice, where there is least admixture of its opposite; and then we may say of it, in the words of the Philosopher, that "neither the

* Gilbert de la Porrée, †1154. The "Six Principles" were the last six of the Ten Categories of Aristotle, and the book became one of the chief elementary logic-books of the Middle Ages. *Vide* Hauréau, *Philosophie Scolastique*, 1e Partie, p. 452.

star of morning nor of evening is so admirable."* For then is it like Phœbe, when she looks across the heavens at her brother from the purple of the morning calm.

Now Justice, as a state of mind,† has a force which opposes it in the will; for where the will of a man is not pure from all desire, then, though there be Justice, yet there is not Justice in all its ideal brightness; for there is in that man, however little, yet in some degree, an opposing force; and therefore they, who would work on the feelings‡ of a judge, are rightly repelled. But, in practice,§ Justice finds an opposing force in what men are able to do. For, seeing that it is a virtue regulating our conduct towards other men, how shall any act according to Justice if he has not the power of rendering to all their due? Therefore it is plain that the operation of Justice will be wide in proportion to the power of the just man.

From this let us argue: Justice is strongest in the world when it is in one who is most willing and most powerful; only the Monarch is this; therefore, only when Justice is in the Monarch is it strongest in the world. This pro-syllogism goes on through the second figure, with an involved negative, and is like

* From Arist. *Ethics*, v. 1.—(W.) † "*Quantum ad habitum.*"
‡ "*Passionare.*" § "*Quantum ad operationem.*"

this: All B is A; only C is A; therefore only C is B: or all B is A; nothing but C is A; therefore nothing but C is B.

Our previous explanation makes the first proposition apparent: the second is proved thus, first in regard to will, and secondly in regard to power. First it must be observed that the strongest opponent of Justice is Appetite, as Aristotle intimates in the fifth book to Nicomachus.* Remove Appetite altogether, and there remains nothing adverse to Justice; and therefore it is the opinion of the Philosopher that nothing should be left to the judge, if it can be decided by law;† and this ought to be done for fear of Appetite, which easily perverts men's minds. Where, then, there is nothing to be wished for, there can be no Appetite, for the passions cannot exist if their objects are destroyed. But the Monarch has nothing to desire, for his jurisdiction is bounded only by the ocean; and this is not the case with other princes, whose kingdoms are bounded by those of their neighbours; as, for instance, the kingdom of Castile is bounded by the kingdom of Aragon. From which it follows that the Monarch is able to be the purest embodiment of Justice among men.

Further, as Appetite in some degree, however

* *Eth.* v. 2.—(W.)

† *Rhetoric*, i. 1.—(W.)

small, clouds the habit of Justice, so does Charity, or rightly-directed affection, sharpen and enlighten it. In whomsoever, therefore, rightly-directed affection may chiefly dwell, in him may Justice best have place: and of this sort is the Monarch. Therefore where a Monarch reigns Justice is, or at least may be, strongest. That rightly-directed affections work as we have said, we may see thus: Appetite, scorning* what in itself belongs to man, seeks for other things outside him; but Charity sets aside all else, and seeks God and man, and consequently the good of man. And since of all the good things that men can have the greatest is to live in peace (as we have already said), and as it is Justice which most chiefly brings peace, therefore Charity will chiefly make Justice strong, and the more so in proportion to its own strength.

And it is clear that right affections ought to exist in a Monarch more than in any other man for this reason: the object of love is the more loved the nearer it is to him that loves; but men are nearer to a Monarch than they are to other princes; therefore it is by a Monarch that they are, or ought to be, most loved. The first proposition is manifest if the nature of activity and passivity are considered. The

* "*Perseitas hominum*" = "*facultas per se subsistendi.*"—DUCANGE.

second is manifest because men are brought near to a Monarch in their totality,* but to other princes only partially; and it is only by means of the Monarch that men are brought near other princes at all. Thus the Monarch cares for all primarily and directly, whereas other princes only care for their subjects through the Monarch, and because their care for their subjects descends from the supreme care of the Monarch.

Again, a cause has the nature of a cause in proportion as it is more universal; for the lower cause is such only on account of the higher one, as appears from the Treatise on Causes.† And, in proportion as a cause is really a cause, it loves what it effects; for such love follows the cause by itself. Now Monarchy is the most universal cause of men living well, for other princes work only through the Monarch, as we have said; and it therefore follows that it is the Monarch who will most chiefly love the good of men. But that in practice the Monarch is most disposed to work Justice, who can doubt, except indeed a man

* "*Secundum totum.*"

† A compilation from the Arabians, or perhaps Aristotle or Proclus, which, under various names, passed for a work of Aristotle, and is ascribed by Albert the Great to a certain David the Jew. It is quoted in the twelfth century, and was commented on by Albert and Thomas Aquinas. *Vide* Jourdain, *Recherches sur les traductions d'Aristote* (1842), pp. 114, 184, 193, 195, 445; *Philosophie de S. Thomas* (1858), i. 94.

who understands not the meaning of the word? for if he be really a Monarch he cannot have enemies.

The principle assumed being therefore sufficiently explained, the conclusion is certain, to wit, that a Monarch is necessary that the world may be ordered for the best.

XII.—Again, the human race is ordered best when it is most free. This will be manifest if we see what is the principle of freedom. It must be understood that the first principle of our freedom is freedom of will, which many have in their mouth, but few indeed understand. For they come so far as to say that the freedom of the will means a free judgment concerning will. And this is true. But what is meant by the words is far from them: and they do just as our logicians do all day long with certain propositions which are set as examples in the books of logic, as that, "the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles."*

Therefore I say that Judgment is between Apprehension and Appetite. First, a man apprehends a thing; then he judges it to be good or bad; then he pursues or avoids it accordingly. If therefore the Judgment guides the Appetite wholly, and in no way

* Cf. Arist. *Magna Moral.* i. 1: "It would be absurd if a man, wishing to prove that the angles of a triangle were equal to two right angles, assumed as his principle that the soul is immortal."—WITTE.

is forestalled by the Appetite, then is the Judgment free. But if the Appetite in any way at all forestalls the Judgment and guides it, then the Judgment cannot be free: it is not its own: it is captive to another power. Therefore the brute beasts cannot have freedom of Judgment; for in them the Appetite always forestalls the Judgment. Therefore, too, it is that intellectual beings whose wills are unchangeable, and souls which are separate from the body, which have gone hence in peace, do not lose the freedom of their wills, because their wishes cannot change; nay, it is in full strength and completeness that their wills are free.*

It is therefore again manifest that this liberty, or this principle of all our liberty, is the greatest gift bestowed by God on mankind: by it alone we gain happiness† as men: by it alone we gain happiness elsewhere as gods.‡ But if this is so, who will say that human kind is not in its best state, when it can most use this principle? But he who lives under a Monarchy is most free. Therefore let it be understood that he is free who exists not for another's sake but for his own, as the Philosopher, in his Treatise of simple Being, thought.§ For everything which exists for the sake

* Cf. *Purgatorio*, xviii. 22.—WITTE. † "*Felicitamur.*"
‡ "*Ut Dii*;" cf. *Paradiso*, v. 19.—WITTE.
§ *I.e. Metaphys.* I, 2.—(W.)

of some other thing, is necessitated by that other thing, as a road has to run to its ordained end. Men exist for themselves, and not at the pleasure of others, only if a Monarch rules; for then only are the perverted forms of government set right, while democracies, oligarchies, and tyrannies, drive mankind into slavery, as is obvious to any who goes about among them all; and public power* is in the hands of kings and aristocracies, which they call the rule of the best, and champions of popular liberty. And because the Monarch loves his subjects much, as we have seen, he wishes all men to be good, which cannot be the case in perverted forms of government:† therefore the Philosopher says, in his *Politics*:‡ "In the bad state the good man is a bad citizen, but in a good state the two coincide." Good states in this way aim at liberty, that in them men may live for themselves. The citizens exist not for the good of consuls, nor the nation for the good of its king; but the consuls for the good of the citizens, and the king for the good of his nation. For as the laws are made to suit the state, and not the state to suit the laws, so those who live under the laws are not ordered for the legislator, but he for them;§ as also

* "*Politizant reges.*"
† "*Oblique politizantes.*"
‡ *Polit.* iii. 4.
§ *Ibid.* iii. 16, 17.—(W.)

the Philosopher holds, in what he has left us on the present subject. Hence, too, it is clear that although the king or the consul rule over the other citizens in respect of the means* of government, yet in respect of the end of government they are the servants of the citizens, and especially the Monarch, who, without doubt, must be held the servant of all. Thus it becomes clear that the Monarch is bound by the end appointed to himself in making his laws. Therefore mankind is best off under a Monarchy, and hence it follows that Monarchy is necessary for the welfare of the world.

XIII.—Further, he who can be best fitted to rule can best fit others. For in every action the main end of the agent, whether acting by necessity of nature or voluntarily, is to unfold his own likeness; and therefore every agent, so far as he is of this sort, delights in action. For since all that is desires its own existence, and since the agent in acting enlarges his own existence in some way, delight follows action of necessity; for delight is inseparable from gaining what is desired. Nothing therefore acts unless it is of such sort as that which is acted on ought to be; therefore the Philosopher said in his *Metaphysics*,† "Everything which becomes

* "*Respectu viæ . . . respectu termini.*"

† *Metaphys.* ix. 8.—(W.)

actual from being potential, becomes so by means of something actual of the same kind," and were anything to try to act in any other way it would fail. Hence we may overthrow the error of those who think to form the moral character of others by speaking well and doing ill; forgetting that the hands of Jacob were more persuasive with his father than his words, though his hands deceived and his voice spake truth. Hence the Philosopher, to Nicomachus: "In matters of feeling and action, words are less to be trusted than deeds."* And therefore God said to David in his sin, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?" as though He would say, "Thou speakest in vain, for thou art different from what thou speakest." Hence it may be gathered that he needs to be fitted for his work in the best way who wishes to fit others.

But the Monarch is the only one who can be fitted in the best possible way to govern. Which is thus proved: Each thing is the more easily and perfectly qualified for any habit, or actual work, the less there is in it of what is contrary to such a disposition. Therefore, they who have never even heard of philosophy, arrive at a habit of truth in philosophy more easily and completely than those who have listened to it at odd times, and are filled with

* Arist. *Eth.* x. 1.—(W.)

false opinions. For which reason Galen well says: "Such as these require double time to acquire knowledge."* A Monarch then has nothing to tempt appetite, or, at least, less than any other man, as we have shown before; whereas other princes have much; and appetite is the only corrupter of righteousness, and the only impediment to justice. A Monarch therefore is wholly, or at least more than any other prince, disposed to govern well: for in him there may be judgment and justice more strongly than in any other. But these two things are the pre-eminent attributes of a maker of law, and of an executor of law, as that most holy king David testified when he asked of God the things which were befitting the king, and the king's son, saying: "Give the king thy judgment, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son."†

We were right then when we assumed that only the Monarch can be best fitted to rule. Therefore only the Monarch can in the best way fit other men. Therefore it follows that Monarchy is necessary for the best ordering of the world.

XIV.—And where a thing can be done by one agent, it is better to do it by one than by several, for this reason: Let it be possible to do a certain thing by

* *De cognosc. animi morbis*, c. 10.—WITTE.

† Cf. *Parad.* xiii. 95.—(W.)

means of A, and also by means of A and B. If therefore what is done by A and B can be done by A alone, it is useless to add B; for nothing follows from the addition; for the same end which A and B produced is produced also by A. All additions of this kind are useless and superfluous: all that is superfluous is displeasing to God and Nature: and all that is displeasing to God and Nature is bad, as is manifest. It therefore follows not only that it is better that a thing should be done by one than by many agents, if it is possible to produce the effect by one; but also that to produce the effect by one is good, and to produce it by many is simply bad. Again, a thing is said to be better by being nearer to the best, and the end has the nature of the best. But for a thing to be done by one agent is better, for so it comes nearer to the end. And that so it comes nearer is manifest; for let C be the end which may be reached by A, or by A and B together: plainly it is longer to reach C by A and B together than by B alone. But mankind may be governed by one supreme prince, who is, the Monarch.

But it must be carefully observed that when we say that mankind may be ruled by one supreme prince, we do not mean that the most trifling judgments for each particular town are to proceed immediately from him. For municipal laws sometimes fail,

and need guidance, as the Philosopher shows in his fifth book to Nicomachus, when he praises equity.* For nations and kingdoms and states have, each of them, certain peculiarities which must be regulated by different laws. For law is the rule which directs life. Thus the Scythians need one rule, for they live beyond the seventh climate,† and suffer cold which is almost unbearable, from the great inequality of their days and nights. But the Garamantes need a different law, for their country is equinoctial, and they cannot wear many clothes, from the excessive heat of the air, because the day is as long as the darkness of the night. But our meaning is that it is in those matters which are common to all men, that men should be ruled by one Monarch, and be governed by a rule common to them all, with a view to their peace. And the individual princes must receive this rule of life or law from him, just as the practical intellect receives its major premiss from the speculative intellect, under which it places its own particular premiss, and then draws its particular

* *Eth.* v. 14.—(W.)

† Ptolemy, the mediæval authority on geography, divided the known world into κλίματα, zones of slope towards the pole, or belts of latitude, eight of which from the equinoctial to the mouths of the Tanais and the Riphæan mountains. The seventh "clima" passed over the mouths of the Borysthenes. See Mercator's map in Bertius' *Theatrum Geographiæ Veteris* (1618), art. "Ptolemy" in Smith's *Dictionary of Biography*, p. 577. Dictionary of Antiquities, art. "Clima."

conclusion, with a view to action. And it is not only possible for one man to act as we have described; it is necessary that it should proceed from one man only to avoid confusion in our first principles. Moses himself wrote in his law that he had acted thus. For he took the elders of the tribes of the children of Israel, and left to them the lesser judgments, reserving to himself such as were more important, and wider in their scope; and the elders carried these wider ones to their tribes, according as they were applicable to each separate tribe.

Therefore it is better for the human race to be ruled by one than by many, and therefore there should be a Monarch, who is a single prince; and if it is better, it is more acceptable to God, since God always wills what is best. And since of these two ways of government the one is not only the better, but the best of all, it follows not only that this one is more acceptable to God as between one and many, but that it is the most acceptable. Therefore it is best for the human race to be governed by one man; and Monarchy is necessary for the welfare of the world.

XV.—I say also that Being, and Unity, and the Good come in order after the fifth mode of priority.*

* Arist. *Categ., e.g.*: Priority is said in five ways—1. First in *time.* 2. First in *pre-supposition.* 3. First in *order.* 4. First in *excellence.* 5. First in *logical sequence.*

For Being comes by nature before Unity, and Unity before Good. Where Being is most, there Unity is greatest; and where Unity is greatest, there Good is also greatest; and in proportion as anything is far from Being in its highest form, is it far from Unity, and therefore from Good. Therefore in every kind of things, that which is most one is best, as the Philosopher holds in the treatise about simple Being. Therefore it appears that to be one is the root of Good, and to be many the root of Evil. Therefore, Pythagoras in his parallel tables placed the one, or Unity, under the line of good, and the many under the line of Evil; as appears from the first book of the *Metaphysics*.* Hence we may see that to sin is nothing else than to pass on from the one which we despise and to seek many things, as the Psalmist saw when he said: "By the fruit of their corn and wine and oil, are they multiplied."†

Hence it is plain that whatever is good, is good for this reason, that it consists in unity. And because concord is a good thing in so far as it is concord, it is manifest that it consists in a certain unity, as its proper root, the nature of which will appear if we find the real nature of concord. Concord then is the uniform motion of many wills; and hence it appears

* *V.* Arist. *Metaph.* 1, 5; *Ethics* i. 4; cf. Ritter and Preller, *Hist. Philos.* sec. 105

† Ps. iv. 8 (vulg.).

that a unity of wills, by which is meant their uniform motion, is the root of concord, nay, concord itself. For as we should say that many clods of earth are concordant, because that they all gravitate together towards the centre; and that many flames are concordant because that they all ascend together towards the circumference, if they did this of their own free will, so we say that many men are in concord because that they are all moved together, as regards their willing, to one thing, which one thing is formally in their wills just as there is one quality formally in the clods of earth, that is gravity, and one in the flame of fire, that is lightness. For the force of willing is a certain power; but the quality of good which it apprehends is its form; which form, like as others, being one is multiplied in itself, according to the multiplication of the matters which receive it, as the soul, and numbers, and other forms which belong to what is compound.*

To explain our assumption as we proposed, let us argue thus: All concord depends on unity which is in wills; the human race, when it is at its best, is a kind of concord; for as one man at his best is a kind of concord, and as the like is true of the family, the city, and the kingdom; so is it of the whole human

* On the scholastic doctrine of forms, *v.* Thom. Aquin. *Summ.* I. 105, art. 4.

race. Therefore the human race at its best depends on the unity which is in will. But this cannot be unless there be one will to be the single mistress and regulating influence of all the rest. For the wills of men, on account of the blandishments of youth, require one to direct them, as Aristotle shows in the tenth book of his *Ethics*.* And this cannot be unless there is one prince over all, whose will shall be the mistress and regulating influence of all the others. But if all these conclusions be true, as they are, it is necessary for the highest welfare of the human race that there should be a Monarch in the world; and therefore Monarchy is necessary for the good of the world.

XVI.—To all these reasons alleged above a memorable experience adds its confirmation. I mean that condition of mankind which the Son of God, when, for the salvation of man, He was about to put on man, either waited for, or, at the moment when He willed, Himself so ordered. For if, from the fall of our first parents, which was the turning point at which all our going astray began, we carry our thoughts over the distribution of the human race and the order of its times, we shall find that never but under the divine Augustus, who was sole ruler, and

* Arist. *Eth.* x. 5.—(W.)

under whom a perfect Monarchy existed, was the world everywhere quiet. And that then the human race was happy in the tranquillity of universal peace, this is the witness of all writers of history; this is the witness of famous poets; this, too, he who wrote the story of the "meekness and gentleness of Christ" has thought fit to attest. And last of all, Paul has called that most blessed condition "the fulness of the times." For then, indeed, time was full, and all the things of time; because no office belonging to our felicity wanted its minister. But how the world has fared since that "seamless robe" has suffered rending by the talons of ambition, we may read in books; would that we might not see it with our eyes. Oh, race of mankind! what storms must toss thee, what losses must thou endure, what shipwrecks must buffet thee, as long as thou, a beast of many heads, strivest after contrary things. Thou art sick in both thy faculties of understanding; thou art sick in thine affections. Unanswerable reasons fail to heal thy higher understanding; the very sight of experience convinces not thy lower understanding; not even the sweetness of divine persuasion charms thy affections, when it breathes into thee through the music of the Holy Ghost: "Behold, how good and how pleasant a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity."*

* Ps. cxxxii. 1.—(W.)

BOOK II.

I. — "WHY do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed, saying: 'Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us.'"* As we commonly wonder at a new effect, when we have never been face to face with its cause; so, as soon as we understand the cause, we look down with a kind of scorn on those who remain in wonder. I, myself, was once filled with wonder that the Roman people had become paramount throughout all the earth, without any to withstand them; for when I looked at the thing superficially I thought that this supremacy had been obtained, not by any right, but only by arms and violence. But after that I had carefully and thoroughly examined the matter, when I had

* Ps. ii. 1-3.—(W.)

recognised by the most effectual signs that it was divine providence that had wrought this, my wonder ceased, and a certain scornful contempt has taken its place, when I perceive the nations raging against the pre-eminence of the Roman people; when I see the people imagining a vain thing, as I of old imagined; when, above all, I grieve that kings and princes agree in this one matter only, in opposing their Lord, and His one only Roman Emperor. Wherefore in derision, yet not without a touch of sorrow, I can cry on behalf of the glorious people and for Cæsar, together with him who cried on behalf of the Prince of heaven: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed." But the love which nature implants in us allows not scorn to last for long; but, like the summer sun that when it has dispersed the morning clouds shines with full brightness, this love prefers to put scorn aside, and to pour forth the light which shall set men right. So, then, to break the bonds of the ignorance of those kings and princes, and to show that mankind is free from *their* yoke, I will comfort myself in company with that most holy prophet, whom I follow, taking the words which come after: "Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yoke from us."

These two things will be sufficiently performed, if I address myself to the second part of the argument, and manifest the truth of the question before us. For thus, if we show that the Roman Empire is *by right*, not only shall we disperse the clouds of ignorance from the eyes of those princes who have wrongly seized the helm of public government, falsely imputing this thing to the Roman people; but all men shall understand that they are free from the yoke of these usurpers. The truth of the question can be made clear not only by the light of human reason, but also by the ray of God's authority; and when these two coincide, then heaven and earth must agree together. Supported, therefore, by this conviction, and trusting in the testimony both of reason and of authority, I proceed to settle the second question.

II.—Inquiry concerning the truth of the first doubt has been made as accurately as the nature of the subject permitted; we have now to inquire concerning the second, which is: Whether the Roman people assumed to itself *of right* the dignity of the Empire? And the first thing in this question is to find the truth, to which the reasonings concerning it may be referred as to their proper first principle.

It must be recognised, then, that as there are three degrees in every art, the mind of the artist, his instrument, and the material on which he works, so

we may look upon nature in three degrees. For nature exists, first, in the mind of the First Agent, who is God; then in heaven; as in an instrument, by means of which the likeness of the Eternal Goodness unfolds itself on shapeless* matter. If an artist is perfect in his art, and his instrument is perfect, any fault in the form of his art must be laid to the badness of the material; and so, since God holds the summit of perfection, and since His instrument, which is heaven, admits of no failure of its due perfection (which is manifest from our philosophy touching heaven), it follows that whatever fault is to be found in the lower world is a fault on the part of the subject matter, and is contrary to the intention of God who makes nature,† and of heaven; and if in this lower world there is aught that is good, it must be ascribed first to the artist, who is God, and then to heaven, the instrument of God's art, which men call nature; for the material, being merely a possibility, can do nothing of itself.‡

Hence it is apparent that, since all Right § is good, it therefore exists first in the mind of God; and since all that is in the mind of God is God, according to the

* "*Fluitantem.*" † "*Dei naturantis.*"

‡ Witte refers to *Parad.* xiii. 67, xxix. 32, i. 127–130. Cf. Thom. Aquin. *Summ.* I., q. 66, art. 1–3; q. 110, art. 2; q. 115, art. 3–6. This view satisfied thinkers to the time of Hooker (*E. P.* I. iii.), but was criticised by Bacon, *Nov. Org.* i. 66. § "*Jus.*"

saying, "What was made, in Him was life;"* and as God chiefly wishes for what is Himself, it follows that Right is the wish of God, so far as it is in Him. And since in God the will and the wish are the same, it further follows that this Right is the will of God. Again it follows that Right in the world is nothing else than the likeness of the will of God, and therefore whatever does not agree with the divine will cannot be Right, and whatever does agree with the divine will is Right itself. Therefore to ask if a thing be by Right is only to ask in other words if it is what God wills. It may therefore be assumed that what God wills to see in mankind is to be held as real and true Right.

Besides we must remember Aristotle's teaching in the first book of his *Ethics*, where he says: "We must not seek for certitude in every matter, but only as far as the nature of the subject admits."† Therefore our arguments from the first principle already found will be sufficient, if from manifest evidence and from the authority of the wise, we seek for the right of that glorious people. The will of God is an invisible thing, but "the invisible things of God are seen, being understood by the things which are made." For when the seal is out of sight, the wax, which has its

* St. John i. 3.—(W.)

† *Eth.* i. 7, from Thom. Aq. *Lect.* XI.—(W.)

impression, gives manifest evidence of it, though it be unseen; nor is it strange that the will of God must be sought by signs; for the human will, except to the person himself who wills, is only discerned by signs.*

III.—My answer then to the question is, that it was by right, and not by usurpation, that the Roman people assumed to itself the office of Monarchy, or, as men call it, the Empire, over all mankind. For in the first place it is fitting that the noblest people should be preferred to all others; the Roman people was the noblest; therefore it is fitting that it should be preferred to all others. By this reasoning I make my proof; for since honour is the reward of goodness, and since to be preferred is always honour, therefore to be preferred is always the reward of goodness. It is plain that men are ennobled for their virtues; that is, for their own virtues or for those of their ancestors; for nobleness is virtue and ancestral wealth, according to Aristotle in his Politics; and according to Juvenal, "There is no nobleness of soul but virtue,"† which two statements refer to two sorts of nobleness, our own and that of our ancestors.‡

* The image of the wax and seal was a favourite one. V. *Parad.* vii. 68, viii. 127, xiii. 67–75, quoted by Witte, who also refers to the *Epist. ad Reges*, § 8, p. 444, ed. Fraticelli.

† Arist. *Pol.* iii. 12; Juv. viii. 20.—(W.)

‡ Witte refers to Dante's commentary on his own Canzone in the *Convito* iv. 3, and the *Parad.* xvi. 1.

To be preferred, therefore, is, according to reason, the fitting reward of the noble. And since rewards must be measured by desert, according to that saying of the Gospel, "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again;" therefore to the most noble the highest place should be given. The testimonies of the ancients confirm our opinion; for Virgil, our divine poet, testifies throughout his *Æneid*, that men may ever remember it, that the glorious king, Æneas, was the father of the Roman people. And this Titus Livius, the famous chronicler of the deeds of the Romans, confirms in the first part of his work, which takes its beginning from the capture of Troy. The nobleness of this most unconquerable and most pious ancestor not only in regard to his own great virtue, but also to that of his forefathers and of his wives, the nobleness of whom was combined in their descendant by the rightful law of descent, I cannot unfold at length; "I can but touch lightly on the outlines of the truth."*

For the virtue then of Æneas himself, hear what our poet tells us when he introduces Ilioneus in the first *Æneid*, praying thus: "Æneas was our king; in justice and piety he has not left a peer, nor any to equal him in war." Hear Virgil in the sixth *Æneid*,

* "Sed summa sequar vestigia rerum." Virg. *Æn.* i. 342 ("fastigia" in all good MSS. and edd.).

when he speaks of the death of Misenus, who had been Hector's attendant in war, and, after Hector's death, had attached himself to Æneas; for there Virgil says that Misenus "followed as good a man;" thus comparing Æneas to Hector, whom* Homer ever praises above all men, as the Philosopher witnesses in his *Ethics*, in what he writes to Nicomachus on habits to be avoided.

But, as for hereditary virtue, he was ennobled from all three continents both by his forefathers and his wives. From Asia came his immediate ancestor, Assaracus, and others who reigned in Phrygia, which is a part of Asia. Therefore Virgil writes in the third *Æneid*: "After that it had seemed good to Heaven to overthrow the power of Asia, and the guiltless race of Priam." From Europe came the male founder of his race, who was Dardanus; from Africa his grandmother Electra, daughter of the great king Atlas, to both which things the poet testifies in the eighth *Æneid*, where Æneas says to Evander: "Dardanus, the father of our city, and its founder, whom the Greeks call the son of Atlas and Electra, came to the race of Teucer—Electra, whose sire was great Atlas, on whose shoulders rests the circle of heaven." But in the third *Æneid* Virgil says that Dardanus drew his

* *Æn.* i. 544, vi. 170. *Il.* xxiv. 258, quoted in Aristotle, *Ethics*, vii 1.—(W.)

origin from Europe. "There is a land which the Greeks have named Hesperia, an ancient land, strong and wealthy, where the Ænotrians dwell; it is said that now their descendants have named the country Italy, from the name of their king. There is our rightful home; from that land did Dardanus come." That Atlas came from Africa, the mountain called by his name, which stands in that continent, bears witness; and Orosius says that it is in Africa in his description of the world, where he writes: "Its boundary is Mount Atlas, and the islands which are called 'the happy isles.'" "Its"—that is, "of Africa," of which he was speaking.*

Likewise I find that by marriage also Æneas was ennobled; his first wife, Creusa, the daughter of king Priam, was from Asia, as may be gathered from our previous quotations; and that she was his wife our poet testifies in the third *Æneid*, where Andromache asks Æneas: "What of the boy Ascanius, whom Creusa bore to thee, while the ruins of Troy were yet smoking? Lives he yet to breathe this air?"† The second wife was Dido, the queen and foundress of Carthage in Africa. That she was the wife of Æneas our poet sings in his fourth *Æneid*, where he

* *Æn.* iii. 1, viii. 134, iii. 163; Oros. i. 2.—(W.)

† III. 339. The best MSS. of Virgil omit "peperit fumante Creusa."

says of Dido: "No more does Dido think of love in secret. She calls it marriage, and with this name she covers her sin." The third wife was Lavinia, the mother of Albans and Romans alike, the daughter of king Latinus and his heir, if we may trust the testimony of our poet in his last *Æneid*, where he introduces Turnus conquered, praying to Æneas thus: "Thou hast conquered, and the Ausonians have seen me lift my hands in prayer for mercy; Lavinia is thine."* This last wife was from Italy, the noblest region of Europe.

And now that we have marked these things for evidence of our assertion, who will not rest persuaded that the father of the Romans, and therefore the Romans themselves, were the noblest people under heaven? Who can fail to see the divine predestination shown forth by the double meeting of blood from every part of the world in the veins of one man?

IV.—Again, that which is helped to its perfection by miracles is willed by God, and therefore it is of right. This is manifestly true, for as Thomas says in his third book against the Gentiles, "a miracle is something done by God beyond the commonly established order of things."† And so he proves that

* *Æn.* xii. 936.—(W.) † *Contra Gent.* iii. 101.—(W.)

God alone can work miracles; and his proof is strengthened by the authority of Moses; for on the occasion of the plague of lice, when the magicians of Pharaoh used natural principles artfully, and then failed, they said: "This is the finger of God."* A miracle therefore being the immediate working of the first agent, without the co-operation of any secondary agents, as Thomas himself sufficiently proves in the book which we have mentioned, it is impious to say where a miracle is worked in aid of anything, that that thing is not of God, as something well pleasing to him, which he foresaw. Therefore it is religious to accept the contradictory of this. The Roman Empire has been helped to its perfection by miracles; therefore it was willed by God, and consequently was and is by right.†

It is proved by the testimony of illustrious authors that God stretched forth His hand to work miracles on behalf of the Roman Empire. For Livy, in the first part of his work, testifies that a shield fell from heaven into the city chosen of God in the time of Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome, whilst he was sacrificing after the manner of the Gentiles. Lucan mentions this miracle in the ninth book of his Pharsalia, when he is describing the incredible force

* Exod. vii. 12–15.—(W.)

† Witte refers to the *Ep. ad Reges*, § 8, for the same thought.

of the South wind. He says: "Surely it was thus, while Numa was offering sacrifices, that the shield fell with which the chosen patrician youth moves along. The South wind, or the North wind, had spoiled the people that bore our shields."* And when the Gauls had taken all the city, and, under cover of the darkness, were stealing on to attack the Capitol itself, the capture of which was all that remained to destroy the very name of Rome, then as Livy, and many other illustrious writers agree in testifying, a goose, which none had seen before, gave a warning note of the approach of the Gauls, and aroused the guards to defend the Capitol.† And our poet commemorates the event in his description of the shield of Æneas in the eighth book. "Higher, and in front of the temple stood Manlius, the watchman of the Tarpeian keep, guarding the rock of the Capitol. The palace stood out clear, rough with the thatch which Romulus had laid; here the goose, inlaid in silver, fluttered on the portico of gold, as it warned the Romans that the Gauls were even now on the threshold."‡

And when the nobility of Rome had so fallen under the onset of Hannibal, that nothing remained for the final destruction of the Roman commonwealth, but the Carthaginian assault on the city, Livy tells us

* Luc. ix. 477.—(W.) † V. Liv. v. 47, and the *Convito*, iv. 5.—(W.)
‡ *Æn.* viii. 652.—(W.)

in the course of his history of the Punic war, that a sudden dreadful storm of hail fell upon them, so that the victors could not follow up their victory.*

Was not the escape of Cloelia wonderful, a woman, and captive in the power of Porsenna, when she burst her bonds, and, by the marvellous help of God, swam across the Tiber, as almost all the historians of Rome tell us, to the glory of that city?†

Thus was it fitting that He should work who foresaw all things from the beginning, and ordained them in the beauty of His order; so that He, who when made visible was to show forth miracles for the sake of things invisible, should, whilst invisible, also show forth miracles for the sake of things visible.

V.—Further, whoever works for the good of the state, works with Right as his end. This may be shown as follows. Right is that proportion of man to man as to things, and as to persons, which, when it is preserved, preserves society, and when it is destroyed, destroys society.‡ The description of Right in the Digest does not give the essence of right, but only describes it for practical purposes.§ If therefore our definition comprehends well the essence and reason of

* Liv. xxvi. 11; Oros. iv. 17.—(W.)

† Liv. ii. 13; Oros. ii. 5.—(W.) ‡ Cf. Aristotle, *Ethics*, v. 6.

§ "Jus est ars boni et æqui." L. 1, fr. *Dig. De Justitia et Jure*, i. 1.—(W.)

Right, and if the end of any society is the common good of its members, it is necessary that the end of all Right is the common good, and it is impossible that that can be Right, which does not aim at the common good. Therefore Cicero says well in the first book of his *Rhetoric*: "Laws must always be interpreted for the good of the state."* If laws do not aim at the good of those who live under them, they are laws only in name; in reality they cannot be laws. For it behoves them to bind men together for the common good; and Seneca therefore says well in his book "on the four virtues:" "Law is the bond of human society."† It is therefore plain that whoever aims at the good of the state, aims at the end of Right; and therefore, if the Romans aimed at the good of the state, we shall say truly that they aimed at the end of Right.

That in bringing the whole world into subjection, they aimed at this good, their deeds declare. They renounced all selfishness, a thing always contrary to the public weal; they cherished universal peace and liberty; and that sacred, pious, and glorious people are seen to have neglected their own private interests that they might follow public objects for the good of all mankind. Therefore was it well

* *De Invent.* i. 38.—(W.)

† Not Seneca, but Martin, Bp. of Braga, † 580.—(W.) V. *Biog. Univ.*

written: "The Roman Empire springs from the fountain of piety."*

But seeing that nothing is known of the intention of an agent who acts by free choice to any but the agent himself, save only by external signs, and since reasonings must be examined according to the subject matter (as has already been said), it will be sufficient on this point if we set forth proofs which none can doubt, of the intention of the Roman people, both in their public bodies and individually.

Concerning those public bodies by which men seem in a way to be bound to the state, the authority of Cicero alone, in the second book of the *De Officiis*, will suffice. "So long," he says, "as the Empire of the republic was maintained not by injustice, but by the benefits which it conferred, we fought either for our allies or for the Empire. Our wars brought with them an ending which was either indulgent, or else was absolutely necessary. All kings, peoples, and nations found a port of refuge in the Senate. Our magistrates and generals alike sought renown by defending our provinces and our allies with good faith and with justice. Our government might have been called not so much Empire, as a Protectorate of the whole world." So wrote Cicero.†

* "*Romanum imperium de fonte nascitur pietatis.*"—(WITTE.) He has not been able to trace the saying. † *De Off.* ii. 8.—(W.)

Of individuals I will speak shortly. Shall we not say that they intended the common good, who by hard toil, by poverty, by exile, by bereavement of their children, by loss of limb, by sacrifice of their lives, endeavoured to build up the public weal? Did not great Cincinnatus leave us a sacred example of freely laying down his office at its appointed end, when, as Livy tells us, he was taken from the plough and made dictator? And after his victory, after his triumph, he gave back his Imperator's sceptre to the consuls, and returned to the ploughshare to toil after his oxen.* Well did Cicero, arguing against Epicurus, in the volume *De Finibus*, speak in praise of him, mindful of this good deed.† "And so," he says, "our ancestors took Cincinnatus from the plough, and made him dictator."

Has not Fabricius left us a lofty example of resisting avarice, when, poor man as he was, for the faith by which he was bound to the republic, he laughed to scorn the great weight of gold which was offered him, and refused it, scorning it with words which became him well. His story too is confirmed by our poet in the sixth *Æncid*,‡ where he speaks of "Fabricius strong in his poverty."

Has not Camillus left us a memorable example of

* Liv. vi. 28, 29; Oros. ii. 12.—(W.)

† II. 4.—(W.)

‡ VI. 844.—(W.)

obeying the laws instead of seeking our private advantage? For according to Livy he was condemned to exile, and then, after that he had delivered his country from the invaders, and had restored to Rome her own Roman spoils, he yet turned to leave the sacred city, though the whole people bade him stay; nor did he return till leave was given him to come back by the authority of the Senate. This high-souled hero also is commended in the sixth *Æneid*, where our poet speaks of "Camillus, that restored to us our standards."*

Was not Brutus the first to teach that our sons, that all others, are second in importance to the liberty of our country? For Livy tells us how, when he was consul, he condemned his own sons to death, for that they had conspired with the enemy. His glory is made new in our poet's sixth book, where he sings how "The father shall summon the sons to die for the sake of fair liberty, when they seek to stir fresh wars."†

Has not Mucius encouraged us to dare everything for our country's sake, when after attacking Porsenna unawares, he watched the hand which had missed its stroke being burnt, though it was his own, as if he were beholding the torment of a foe? This also Livy witnesses to with astonishment.

* Liv. v. 46; *Æn.* vi. 826.—(W.)

† *Æn.* vi. 821.—(W.)

Add to these those sacred victims the Decii, who laid down their lives by an act of devotion for the public safety, whom Livy glorifies in his narrative, not as they deserve, but as he was able. Add to these the self-sacrifice, which words cannot express, of Marcus Cato, that staunchest champion of true liberty. These were men of whom the one, that he might save his country, did not fear the shadow of death; while the other, that he might kindle in the world the passionate love of liberty, showed how dear was liberty, choosing to pass out of life a free man, rather than without liberty to abide in life.* The glory of all these heroes glows afresh in the words of Cicero in his book *De Finibus*; of the Decii he speaks thus: "Publius Decius, the head of the Decii, a consul, when he devoted himself for the state, and charged straight into the Latin host, was he thinking aught of his pleasure, where and when he should take it;—when he knew that he had to die at once, and sought that death with more eager desire than, according to Epicurus, we should seek pleasure? And were it not that his deed had justly received its praise, his son would not have done

* Witte quotes the *Convito*, iv. 5, where all these examples are recounted, almost in the same language. He compares *Parad.* vi. 46 (Cincinnatus), *Purgat.* xx. 25 (Fabricius), *Parad.* vi. 47 (Decii), *Purg.* i. where Cato guards the approach to Purgatory.

the like in his fourth consulship; nor would his grandson, again, in the war with Pyrrhus, have fallen, a consul, in battle; and, a third time in continuous succession in that family, have offered himself a victim for the commonwealth." But in the *De Officiis*,* Cicero says of Cato: "Marcus Cato was in no different position from his comrades who in Africa surrendered to Cæsar. The others, had they slain themselves, would perhaps have been blamed for the act, for their life was of less consequence,† and their principles were not so strict. But for Cato, to whom nature had given incredible firmness and who had strengthened this severity by his unremitting constancy to his principles, and who never formed a resolution by which he did not abide, he was indeed bound to die rather than to look on the face of a tyrant."

VI.—Two things therefore have been made clear: first, that whoever aims at the good of the state aims at right;‡ and secondly, that the Roman people in bringing the world into subjection, aimed at the public weal. Therefore let us argue thus: Whoever aims at right, walks according to right; the Roman people in bringing the world into subjection aimed at

* I. 31 (W.), carelessly quoted. † "*Levior*" al. "*lenior.*"
‡ "*Finem juris intendit.*"

right, as we have made manifest in the preceding chapter. Therefore in bringing the world into subjection the Roman people acted according to right, consequently it was by right that they assumed the dignity of Empire.

We reach this conclusion on grounds which are manifest to all. It is manifest from this, that whosoever aims at right, walks according to right. To make this clear, we must mark that everything is made to gain a certain end, otherwise it would be in vain, and as we said before this cannot be. And as everything has its proper end, so every end has some distinct thing of which it is the end. And therefore it is impossible that any two things, spoken of as separate things,* and in so far as they are two, should have the same end as their aim, for so the same absurdity† would follow, that one of them would exist in vain. Since, then, there is a certain end of right, as we have explained, it necessarily follows that when we have decided what that end is, we have also decided what right is; for it is the natural and proper effect of right. And since in any sequence it is impossible to have an antecedent without its consequent, for instance, to have "man" without "animal," as is evident by putting together and

* "*Per se loquendo.*" † "*Inconveniens.*"

taking to pieces the idea,* so also it is impossible to seek for the end of right without right, for each thing stands in the same relation to its proper end, as the consequent does to its antecedent; as without health it is impossible to attain to a good condition of the body. Wherefore, it is most evidently clear that he who aims at the end of right must aim in accordance with right; nor does the contradictory instance which is commonly drawn from Aristotle's treatment of "good counsel" avail anything.† He there says: "It is possible to obtain what is the right result from a syllogism, which is incorrect, but not by an argument which is right, for the middle term is wrong." For if sometimes a right conclusion is obtained from false principles, this is only by accident, and happens only in so far as the true conclusion is imported in the words of the inference. Truth never really follows from falsehood; but the signs of truth may easily follow from the signs of falsehood. So also it is in matters of conduct. If a thief helps a poor man out of the spoils of his thieving, we must not call that charity; but it is an action which would have the form of charity, if it had been done out of the man's own substance. And so of the end of right. If anything,

* "*Construendo et destruendo.*" Technical terms of the conditional syllogism, *constructive* and *destructive.*

† Εὐβουλία. *Ethics*, vi. 10.

such as the end of right, were gained without right, it would only be the end of right, that is, the common good, in the same sense that the gift, made from evil gains, is charity. And so the example proves nothing, for in our proposition we speak, not of the apparent but of the real end of right. What was sought, therefore, is clear.

VII.—What nature has ordained is maintained of right. For nature in its providence does not come short of men's providence; for if it were to come short, the effect would excel the cause in goodness, which is impossible. But we see that when public bodies are founded, not only are the relations of the members to each other considered, but also their capacities for exercising offices; and this is to consider the end of right in the society or order which is founded, for right is not extended beyond what is possible. Nature then, in her ordinances, does not come short in this foresight. Therefore it is clear that nature, in ordaining a thing, has regard to its capacities; and this regard is the fundamental principle of right which nature lays down. From this it follows that the natural order of things cannot be maintained without right; for this fundamental principle of right is inseparably joined to the natural order of things. It is necessary, therefore, that it is of right that this order is preserved.

The Roman people was ordained for empire, by nature, and this may be shown as follows: The man would come short of perfection in his art, who aimed only to produce his ultimate form, and neglected the means of reaching it; in the same way, if nature only aimed at reproducing in the world the universal form of the divine likeness, and neglected the means of doing so, she would be imperfect. But nature, which is the work of the divine intelligence, is wholly perfect; she therefore aims at all the means by which her final end is arrived at.

Since then mankind has a certain end, and since there is a certain means necessary for the universal end of nature, it necessarily follows that nature aims at obtaining that means. And therefore the Philosopher, in the second book of *Natural Learning*,* well shows that nature always acts for the end. And since nature cannot reach this end through one man, because that there are many actions necessary to it, which need many to act, therefore nature must produce many men and set them to act. And besides the higher influence,† the powers and properties of inferior spheres contribute much to this. And therefore we see not only that individual men, but

* Arist. *Phys. Ausc.* ii. 1.—(W.)

† *I.e.* of the heavens. Witte quotes *Parad.* viii. 97, *Purg.* xiv. 38.

also that certain races are born to govern, and certain others to be governed and to serve, as the Philosopher argues in the *Politics*;* and for the latter, as he himself says, subjection is not only expedient, but just, even though they be forced into subjection.

And if this is so, it cannot be doubted that nature ordained in the world a country and a nation for universal sovereignty; if this were not so, she would have been untrue to herself, which is impossible. But as to where that country is, and which is that nation, it is sufficiently manifest, both from what we have said and from what we shall say, that it was Rome and her citizens or people; and this our poet very skilfully touches on in the sixth *Æneid*, where he introduces Anchises prophesying to Æneas, the ancestor of the Romans: "Others may mould the breathing bronze more delicately—I doubt it not; they may chisel from marble the living countenance; they may surpass thee in pleading causes; they may track the course of the heavens with the rod, and tell when the stars will rise; but thou, Roman, remember to rule the nations with thy sway. These shall be thy endowments—to make peace to be the custom of the world; to spare thy foes when they submit, and to crush the proud."† And again, Virgil skilfully notes the

* I. 5, 11; 6, 9.—(W.)

† *Æn.* vi. 848, iv. 227.—(W.)

appointment of the *place*, in the fourth *Æncid*, when he brings in Jupiter speaking to Mercury concerning Æneas: "His fair mother did not promise him to us to be such as this: it was not for this that twice she rescues him from Grecian arms; but that there should be one to rule over Italy, teeming with empires, tempestuous with wars." It has, therefore, sufficiently been shown that the Roman people was by nature ordained to empire. Therefore it was of right that they gained empire, by subduing to themselves the world.

VIII.—But in order properly to discover the truth in our inquiry, we must recognise that the judgment of God is sometimes made manifest to men, and sometimes hidden from them.

It may be made manifest in two ways, namely, by reason and by faith.

There are some judgments of God to which the human reason, by its own paths, can arrive; as, that a man should risk death to save his country. For a part should always risk itself to save its whole, and each man is a part of his State, as is clear from the Philosopher in his *Politics*.* Therefore every man ought to risk himself for his country, as the less good for the better; whence the Philosopher says to

* Arist. *Pol.* i. 2, 12.—(W.)

Nicomachus: "The end is desirable, indeed, even for an individual, but it is better and more divine for a nation and State."* And this is the judgment of God, for if it were not so, right reason in men would miss the intention of nature, which is impossible.

There are also some judgments of God to which, though human reason cannot reach them by its own powers, yet, by the aid of faith in those things which are told us in Holy Scripture it can be lifted up: as, for instance, that no one, however perfect he may be in moral and intellectual virtues, both in habit and in action, can be saved without faith; it being supposed that he never heard aught of Christ. For human reason cannot of itself see this to be just, yet by faith it can. For in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is written, "without faith it is impossible to please God;"† and in Leviticus, "what man soever there be of the House of Israel that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat in the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp, and bringeth it not to the door of the tabernacle to offer an offering unto the Lord, blood shall be imputed to that man."‡ The door of the tabernacle stands for Christ, who is the door of the kingdom of heaven, as may be proved from the

* *Ethics*, i. 1. † Cf. *Parad.* xix. 70.—(W.)
‡ Heb. ii. 6; Levit. xvii. 3, 4.—(W.).

Gospel: the killing of animals represents men's actions.*

But the judgment of God is a hidden one, when man cannot arrive at the knowledge of it either by the law of nature or by the written law, but only occasionally by a special grace. This grace comes in several ways: sometimes by simple revelation, sometimes by revelation assisted by a certain kind of trial or debate. Simple revelation, too, is of two kinds: either God gives it of his own accord, or it is gained by prayer. God gives it of his own accord in two ways, either plainly, or by a sign. His judgment against Saul was revealed to Samuel plainly; but it was by a sign that it was revealed to Pharaoh what God had judged touching the setting free of the children of Israel. The judgment of God is also given in answer to prayer, as he knew who spoke in the second book of Chronicles:† "When we know not what we ought to do, this only have we left, to direct our eyes to Thee."

* Witte quotes from Isidore of Seville, a writer much used in the middle ages, the following: "In a moral sense, we offer a calf when we conquer the pride of the flesh; a lamb, when we correct our irrational impulses; a kid, when we master impurity; a dove, when we are simple; a turtle-dove, when we observe chastity; unleavened bread, 'when we keep the feast not in the leaven of malice, but in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.'"

† 2 Chron. xx. 12 (Vulg.).

Revelation by means of trial is also of two kinds. It is given either by casting lots, or by combat; for "to strive" (*certare*), is derived from a phrase which means "to make certain" (*certum facere*). It is clear that the judgment of God is sometimes revealed to men by casting lots, as in the substitution of Matthias in the Acts of the Apostles.

Again the judgment of God is revealed to men by combat in two ways: either it is by a trial of strength, as in the duels of champions who are called "*duelliones*," or it is by the contention of many men, each striving to reach a certain mark first, as happens in the contests of athletes who run for a prize. The first of these methods was prefigured among the Gentiles by the contests between Hercules and Antæus, which Lucan mentions in the fourth book of his *Pharsalia*, and Ovid in the ninth book of his *Metamorphoses*. The second is prefigured by the contest between Atalanta and Hippomenes, described in the tenth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.*

Moreover, it ought not to pass unnoticed concerning these two kinds of strife, that while in the first each champion may fairly hinder his antagonist, in the second this is not so; for athletes must not hinder one another in their strife, though our poet seems to

* *Phars.* iv. 593; *Metam.* ix. 183, x. 569.—(W.).

have thought differently in the fifth *Æneid* where Euryalus so receives the prize.* But Cicero has done better in forbidding this practice in the third book of the *De Officiis*, following the opinion of Chrysippus.† He there says: "Chrysippus is right here, as he often is, for he says that he who runs in a race should strive with all his might to win, but in no way should he try to trip up his competitor."

With these distinctions, then, we may assume that there are two ways in which men may learn the judgment of God, as we have on this point stated; first by the contests of athletes, and secondly by the contests of champions. These ways of discovering the judgment of God I will treat of in the chapter following.

IX.—That people then, which conquered when all were striving hard for the Empire of the world, conquered by the will of God. For God cares more to settle a universal strife than a particular one; and even in particular contests the athletes sometimes throw themselves on the judgment of God, according to the common proverb: "To whom God makes the grant, him let Peter also bless."‡ It cannot, then, be

* V. 335.—(W.)

† III. 10.—(W.)

‡ Witte only gives a query (?). The saying expresses the Ghibelline view of the relation of the Empire to the Pope; it may have originated with the coronation of Charles the Great.

doubted that the victory in the strife for the Empire of the world followed the judgment of God. The Roman people, when all were striving for the Empire of the world, conquered; it will be plain that so it was, if we consider the prize or goal, and those who strove for it. The prize or goal was the supremacy over all men; for it is this that we call the Empire. None reached this but the Roman people. Not only were they the first, they were the only ones to reach the goal, as we shall shortly see.

The first man who panted for the prize was Ninus, King of the Assyrians; but although for more than ninety years (as Orosius tells*) he, with his royal consort Semiramis, strove for the Empire of the world and made all Asia subject to himself, nevertheless he never subdued the West. Ovid mentions both him and his queen in the fourth book of the *Metamorphoses*, when he says, in the story of Pyramus:† "Semiramis girdled the round space with brick-built walls;" and, "let them come to Ninus' tomb and hide beneath in its shade."

Secondly, Vesoges, King of Egypt, aspired to this prize; but though he vexed the North and South of Asia, as Orosius relates,‡ yet he never gained for himself one-half of the world; nay, when, as it were,

* I. 4.—(W.) † *Metam.* iv. 58, 88.—(W.) ‡ Oros. i. 14.—(W.)

between the judges* and the goal, the Scythians drove him back from his rash enterprise.

Then Cyrus, King of the Persians, made the same attempt; but after the destruction of Babylon, and the transference of its Empire to Persia, he did not even reach the regions of the West, but lost his life and his object in one day at the hands of Tamiris, Queen of the Scythians.†

But after that these had failed, Xerxes, the son of Darius and king among the Persians, assailed the world with so great a multitude of nations, with so great a power, that he bridged the channel of the sea which separates Asia from Europe, between Sestos and Abydos. And of this wonderful work Lucan makes mention in the second book of his *Pharsalia*:‡ "Such paths across the seas, made by Xerxes in his pride, fame tells of." But finally he was miserably repulsed from his enterprise, and could not attain the goal.

Besides these kings, and after their times, Alexander, King of Macedon, came nearest of all to the prize of monarchy; he sent ambassadors to the Romans to demand their submission, but before the

* "Athlothetæ." The judges or umpires in the Greek games, whose seats were opposite to the goal at the side of the stadium. *Vide* Smith's *Dictionary of Antiquities*, s. v. "stadium."

† Oros. ii. 7.—(W.)

‡ *Phars.* ii. 692.—(W.)

Roman answer came, he fell in Egypt, as Livy* tells us, as it were in the middle of the course. Of his burial there, Lucan speaks in the eighth book of his *Pharsalia*,† where he is inveighing against Ptolemy, King of Egypt: "Thou last of the Lagæan race, soon to perish in thy degeneracy, and to yield thy kingdom to an incestuous sister; while for thee the Macedonian is kept in the sacred cave. . . ."

"Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Who will not marvel at thee here? For when Alexander was trying to hinder his Roman competitor in the race, thou didst suddenly snatch him away from the contest that his rashness might proceed no further.

But that Rome has won the crown of so great a victory is proved on the testimony of many. Our poet in his first *Æneid* says:‡ "Hence, surely, shall one day the Romans come, as the years roll on, to be the leaders of the world, from the blood of Teucer

* Not Livy. Cf. ix. 18, 3, where, speaking of Alexander and the Romans, he says: "Quem ne famâ quidem illis notum arbitror fuisse." The story is Greek in origin, coming from Cleitarchus (according to Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* iii. 9), who accompanied Alexander on his Asiatic expedition. Cf. Niebuhr, *Lectures on the History of Rome*, lect. 52, Grote, *History of Greece*, vol. xii. p. 70, note, who argue for its truth, and Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. i. p. 394, who argues against it. Dante, says Witte, used legends about Alexander now lost. Cf. *Inf.* xiv. 31.

† VIII. 692. ‡ I. 234.—(W.)

renewed; over the sea and over the land they shall hold full sway."* And Lucan, in his first book, writes: "The sword assigns the kingdom; and the fortune of that mighty people that rules o'er sea and land and the whole earth, admitted not two to rule." And Boethius, in his second book,† speaking of the Roman prince says: "With his sceptre he ruled the nations, those whom Phœbus beholds, from his rising afar to where he sinks his beams beneath the waves; those who are benumbed by the frosty Seven Stars of the north, those whom the fierce south wind scorches with his heat, parching the burning sands." And Luke, the Scribe of Christ, bears the same testimony, whose every word is true, where he says: "There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be taxed;" from which words we must plainly understand that the Romans had jurisdiction over the whole world.

From all this evidence it is manifest that the Roman people prevailed when all were striving to gain the Empire of the world. Therefore it was by the judgment of God that it prevailed; consequently its Empire was gained by the judgment of God, which is to say, that it was gained by right.

X.—And what is gained as the result of single

* I. 109.—(W.) † *De Consol. Phil.* ii. 6.—(W.)

combat or duel is gained of right. For whenever human judgment fails, either because it is involved in the clouds of ignorance, or because it has not the assistance of a judge, then, lest justice should be left deserted, we must have recourse to Him who loved justice so much that He died to fulfil what it required by shedding His own blood. Therefore the Psalmist wrote: "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness." This result is gained when, by the free consent of the parties, not from hatred but from love of justice, men inquire of the judgment of God by a trial of strength as well of soul as of body. And this trial of strength is called a duel, because in the first instance it was between two combatants, man to man.

But when two nations quarrel they are bound to try in every possible way to arrange the quarrel by means of discussion; it is only when this is hopeless that they may declare war. Cicero and Vegetius agree on this point, the former in his *De Officiis*,* the latter in his book on war. In the practice of medicine recourse may only be had to amputation and cauterising when every other means of cure have been tried. So in the same way, it is only when we have sought in vain for all other modes of deciding a quarrel that we may resort to the remedy of

* *De Off.* i. 12; *De Re Milit.* iii. *prol.*—(W.)

a single combat, forced thereto by a necessity of justice.

Two formal rules, then, of the single combat are clear, one which we have just mentioned, the other, which we touched on before, that the combatants or champions must enter the lists by common consent, not animated by private hatred or love, but simply by an eager desire for justice. Therefore Cicero, in touching on this matter, spoke well when he said: "Wars, which are waged for the crown of empire, must be waged without bitterness."*

But, if the rules of single combat be kept when men are driven by justice to meet together by common consent, in their zeal for justice (and if they are not, the contest ceases to be a single combat), do not they meet together in the name of God? And if it is so, is not God in the midst of them, for He Himself promises us this in the Gospel? And if God is there, is it not impious to suppose that justice can fail? —that justice which He loved so much, as we have just seen. And if single combat cannot fail to secure justice, is not what is gained in single combat gained as of right?

This truth the Gentiles, too, recognised before the trumpet of the Gospel was sounded, when they sought

* "Imperii *gloria*," not "*corona*," in *Cic. de Off.* i. 12.—(W.)

for a judgment in the fortune of single combat. So Pyrrhus, noble both in the manners and in the blood of Æacidæ, gave a worthy answer when the Roman envoys were sent to him to treat for the ransom of prisoners. "I ask not for gold; ye shall pay me no price, being not war-mongers, but true men of war. Let each decide his fate with steel, and not with gold. Whether it be you or I that our mistress wills to reign, or what chance she may bring to each, let us try by valour. Hear ye also this word: those whose valour the fortune of war has spared, their liberty will I too spare. Take ye them as my gift."* So spoke Pyrrhus. By "mistress" he meant Fortune, which we better and more rightly call the Providence of God. Therefore, let the combatants beware that they fight not for money; then it would be no true single combat in which they fought, for they would strive in a court of blood and injustice; and let it not be thought that God would then be present to judge; nay, for it would be that ancient enemy who had been the instigator of the strife. If they wish to be true combatants, and not dealers in blood and injustice, let them keep Pyrrhus before their eyes when they enter the arena, the man who, when he was striving for empire, so scorned gold, as we have said.

* Ennius in *Cic. de Off.* i. 12 (W.) "War-monger" is Spenser's word. *F. Q.* 3, 10, 29.

But, if men will not receive the truth which we have proved, and object, as they are wont, that all men are not equal in strength, we will refute them with the instance of the victory of David over Goliath; and if the Gentiles seek for aught more, let them repel the objection by the victory of Hercules over Antæus. For it is mere folly to fear that the strength which God makes strong should be weaker than a human champion. It is, therefore, now sufficiently clear that what is acquired by single combat is acquired by right.

XI.—But the Roman people gained their empire by duel between man and man; and this is proved by testimonies that are worthy of all credence; and in proving this, we shall also show that where any question had to be decided from the beginning of the Roman Empire, it was tried by single combat.

For first of all, when a quarrel arose about the settling in Italy of Father Æneas, the earliest ancestor of this people, and when Turnus, King of the Rutuli, withstood Æneas, it was at last agreed between the two kings to discover the good pleasure of God by a single combat, which is sung in the last book of the *Æneid.* And in this combat Æneas was so merciful in his victory, that he would have granted life and peace to the conquered foe, had he not seen the belt which

Turnus had taken on slaying Pallas, as the last verses of our poet describe.

Again, when two peoples had grown up in Italy, both sprung from the Trojan stem, namely, the Romans and the Albans, and they had long striven whose should be the sign of the eagle,* and the Penates of Troy, and the honours of empire; at last by mutual consent, in order to have certain knowledge of the case in hand, the three Horatii, who were brethren, and the three Curatii, who were also brethren, fought together before the kings and all the people anxiously waiting on either side; and since the three Alban champions were killed, while one Roman survived, the palm of victory fell to the Romans, in the reign of Hostilius the king. This story has been diligently put together by Livy, in the first part of his history, and Orosius also gives similar testimony.†

Next they fought for empire with their neighbours the Sabines and Samnites, as Livy tells us; all the laws of war were kept; and though those who fought were very many in number, the war was in the form of a combat between man and man. In the contest with the Samnites, Fortune nearly repented her of what she had begun, as Lucan instances in the second book of

* "*Il sacrosanto segno.*" V. *Parad.* vi. 32. † Liv. i. 24; Oros. ii. 4.

his *Pharsalia*:* "How many companies lay dead by the Colline gate then, when the headship of the world and universal empire well-nigh were transferred to other seats, and the Samnite heaped the corpses of Rome beyond the numbers† of the Caudine Forks."

But after that the intestine quarrels of Italy had ceased, and while the issue of the strife with Greece and Carthage was not yet made certain by the judgment of God—for both Greece and Carthage aimed at empire—then Fabricius for Rome, and Pyrrhus for Greece, fought with vast hosts for the glory of empire, and Rome gained the day. And when Scipio for Rome, and Hannibal for Carthage, fought man to man, the Africans fell before the Italians, as Livy and all the other Roman historians strive to tell.

Who then is so dull of understanding as not to see that this glorious people has won the crown of all the world, by the decision of combat? Surely the Roman may repeat Paul's words to Timothy: "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," laid up, that is, in the eternal providence of God. Let, then, the presumptuous Jurists see how far they stand below that watch-tower of reason whence the mind

* II. 135.

† "Romanaque Samnis
Ultra Caudinas superavit vulnera furcas."
Another reading is "sperarit."

of man regards these principles: and let them be silent, content to show forth counsel and judgment according to the meaning of the law.

It has now become manifest that it was by combat of man against man that the Romans gained their empire: therefore it was by right that they gained it, and this is the principal thesis of the present book. Up to this point we have proved our thesis by arguments which mostly rest on principles of reason; we must now make our point clear by arguments based on the principles of the Christian faith.

XII.—For it is they who profess to be zealous for the faith of Christ who have chiefly "raged together," and "imagined a vain thing" against the Roman empire; men who have no compassion on the poor of Christ, whom they not only defraud as to the revenues of the Church; but the very patrimonies of the Church are daily seized upon; and the Church is made poor, while making a show of justice they yet refuse to allow the minister of justice to fulfil his office.

Nor does this impoverishment happen without the judgment of God. For their possessions do not afford help to the poor, to whom belongs as their patrimony the wealth of the Church; and these possessions are held without gratitude to the empire which gives them. Let these possessions go back to whence they came. They came well; their return is

evil: for they were well given, and they are mischievously held. What shall we say to shepherds like these? What shall we say when the substance of the Church is wasted, while the private estates of their own kindred are enlarged? But perchance it is better to proceed with what is set before us; and in religious silence to wait for our Saviour's help.

I say, then, that if the Roman empire did not exist by right, Christ in being born presupposed and sanctioned an unjust thing. But the consequent is false; therefore the contradictory of the antecedent is true; for it is always true of contradictory propositions, that if one is false the other is true. It is not needful to prove the falsity of the consequent to a true believer: for, if he be faithful, he will grant it to be false; and if he be not faithful, then this reasoning is not for him.

I prove the consequence thus: wherever a man of his own free choice carries out a public order, he countenances and persuades by his act the justice of that order; and seeing that acts are more forcible to persuade than words (as Aristotle holds in the tenth book of his *Ethics*),* therefore by this he persuades us more than if it were merely an approval in words. But Christ, as Luke who writes His story,

* *Eth.* x. 1.

says, willed to be born of the Virgin Mary under an edict of Roman authority, so that in that unexampled census of mankind, the Son of God, made man, might be counted as man: and this was to carry out that edict. Perhaps it is even more religious to suppose that it was of God that the decree issued through Cæsar, so that He who had been such long years expected among men should Himself enroll himself with mortal man.

Therefore Christ, by His action, enforced the justice of the edict of Augustus, who then wielded the Roman power. And since to issue a just edict implies jurisdiction, it necessarily follows that He who showed that He thought an edict just, must also have showed that He thought the jurisdiction under which it was issued just; but unless it existed by right it were unjust.

And it must be noted that the force of the argument taken to destroy the consequent, though the argument partly holds from its form, shows its force in the second figure, if it be reduced as a syllogism, just as the argument based on the assumption of the antecedent is in the first figure. The reduction is made thus: all that is unjust is persuaded to men unjustly; Christ did not persuade us unjustly; therefore He did not persuade us to do unjust things. From the assumption of the antecedent thus: all injustice

is persuaded to men unjustly: Christ persuaded a certain injustice to man, therefore He persuaded unjustly.

XIII.—And if the Roman empire did not exist by right, the sin of Adam was not punished in Christ. This is false, therefore its contradictory is true. The falsehood of the consequent is seen thus. Since by the sin of Adam we were all sinners, as the Apostle says:—"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,"—then, if Christ had not made satisfaction for Adam's sin by his death, we should still by our depraved nature be the children of wrath. But this is not so, for Paul, speaking of the Father in his Epistle to the Ephesians, says: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption by His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace, wherein He has abounded towards us." And Christ Himself, suffering in Himself the punishment, says in St. John:, "It is finished;" for where a thing is finished, naught remains to be done.

It is convenient that it should be understood that punishment is not merely penalty inflicted on

him who has done wrong, but that penalty inflicted by one who has penal jurisdiction. And therefore a penalty should not be called punishment, but rather injury, except where it is inflicted by the sentence of a regular judge.* Therefore the Israelites said unto Moses: "Who made thee a judge over us?"

If, therefore, Christ had not suffered by the sentence of a regular judge, the penalty would not properly have been punishment; and none could be a regular judge who had not jurisdiction over all mankind; for all mankind was punished in the flesh of Christ, who "hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows," as saith the Prophet Isaiah. And if the Roman empire had not existed by right, Tiberius Cæsar, whose vicar was Pontius Pilate, would not have had jurisdiction over all mankind. It was for this reason that Herod, not knowing what he did, like Caiaphas, when he spoke truly of the decree of heaven, sent Christ to Pilate to be judged, as Luke relates in his gospel. For Herod was not the vicegerent of Tiberius, under the standard of the eagle, or the standard of the Senate; but only a king, with one particular kingdom given him by Tiberius, and ruling the kingdom committed to his charge under Tiberius.

* "*Ab ordinario judice.*"

Let them cease, then, to insult the Roman empire, who pretend that they are the sons of the Church; when they see that Christ, the bridegroom of the Church, sanctioned the Roman empire at the beginning and at the end of His warfare on earth. And now I think that I have made it sufficiently clear that it was by right that the Romans acquired to themselves the empire of the world.

Oh happy people, oh Ausonia, how glorious hadst thou been, if either he, that weakener of thine empire, had never been born, or if his own pious intention had never deceived him?*

* Constantine the Great.—(W.)

BOOK III.

I.—"HE hath shut the lions' mouths and they have not hurt me, forasmuch as before Him justice was found in me."* At the beginning of this work I proposed to examine into three questions, according as the subject-matter would permit me. Concerning the two first questions our inquiry, as I think, has been sufficiently accomplished in the preceding books. It remains to treat of the third question; and, perchance, it may arouse a certain amount of indignation against me, for the truth of it cannot appear without causing shame to certain men. But seeing that truth from its changeless throne appeals to me—that Solomon too, entering on the forest of his proverbs, teaches me in his own person "to meditate on truth, to hate the wicked;" † seeing that the Philosopher, my instructor in morals, bids me, for the sake of truth, to put aside what is dearest; ‡ I will, therefore, take confidence from the words of Daniel in which the power of God, the shield of the defenders of truth, is set forth, and, according to

* Dan. vi. 22. Vulg.—(W.) † Prov. vii. 7. Vulg.—(W.)
‡ Arist. *Eth.* i. 4.—(W.)

the exhortation of St. Paul, "putting on the breast-plate of faith," and in the heat of that coal which one of the seraphim had taken from off the altar, and laid on the lips of Isaiah, I will enter on the present contest, and, by the arm of Him who delivered us by His blood from the powers of darkness, drive out from the lists the wicked and the liar, in the sight of all the world. Why should I fear, when the Spirit, which is co-eternal with the Father and the Son, saith by the mouth of David: "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance, he shall not be afraid of evil tidings"?*

The present question, then, concerning which we have to inquire, is between two great luminaries, the Roman Pontiff and the Roman Prince: and the question is, does the authority of the Roman Monarch, who, as we have proved in the second book, is the monarch of the world, depend immediately on God, or on some minister or vicar of God; by whom I understand the successor of Peter, who truly has the keys of the kingdom of heaven?

II.—For this, as for the former questions, we must take some principle, on the strength of which we may fashion the arguments of the truth which is to be expounded. For what does it profit to labour, even

* Ps. cxii. 7.—(W.)

in speaking truth, unless we start from a principle? For the principle alone is the root of all the propositions which are the means of proof.

Let us, therefore, start from the irrefragable truth that that which is repugnant to the intention of nature, is against the will of God. For if this were not true its contradictory would not be false; namely, that what is repugnant to the intention of nature is not against God's will, and if this be not false neither are the consequences thereof false. For it is impossible in consequences which are necessary, that the consequent should be false, unless the antecedent were false also.

But if a thing is not "*against the will*" it must either be willed or simply "not willed," just as "not to hate" means "to love," or "not to love;" for "not to love" does not mean "to hate," and "not to will" does not mean "to will not," as is self-evident. But if this is not false, neither will this proposition be false; "God wills what He does not will," than which a greater contradiction does not exist.

I prove that what I say is true as follows: It is manifest that God wills the end of nature; otherwise the motions of heaven would be of none effect, and this we may not say. If God willed that the end should be hindered, He would will also that the hindering power should gain its end, otherwise His

will would be of none effect. And since the end of the hindering power is the non-existence of what it hinders, it would follow that God wills the non-existence of the end of nature which He is said to will.

For if God did not will that the end should be hindered, in so far as He did not will it, it would follow as a consequence to His not willing it, that He cared nought about the hindering power, neither whether it existed, nor whether it did not. But he who cares not for the hindering power, cares not for the thing which can be hindered, and consequently has no wish for it; and when a man has no wish for a thing he wills it not. Therefore, if the end of nature can be hindered, as it can, it follows of necessity that God wills not the end of nature, and we reach our previous conclusion, that God wills what He does not will. Our principle is therefore most true, seeing that from its contradictions such absurd results follow.

III.—At the outset we must note in reference to this third question, that the truth of the first question had to be made manifest rather to remove ignorance than to end a dispute. In the second question we sought equally to remove ignorance and to end a dispute. For there are many things of which we are ignorant, but concerning which we do not quarrel.

In geometry we know not how to square the circle, but we do not quarrel on that point. The theologian does not know the number of the angels, but he does not quarrel about the number. The Egyptian is ignorant of the political system of the Scythians, but he does not therefore quarrel concerning it.* But the truth in this third question provokes so much quarrelling that, whereas in other matters ignorance is commonly the cause of quarrelling, here quarrelling is the cause of ignorance. For this always happens where men are hurried by their wishes past what they see by their reason; in this evil bias they lay aside the light of reason, and being dragged on blindly by their desires, they obstinately deny that they are blind. And, therefore, it often follows not only that falsehood has its own inheritance, but that many men issue forth from their own bounds and stray through the foreign camp, where they understand nothing, and no man understands them; and so they provoke some to anger, and some to scorn, and not a few to laughter.

Now three classes of men chiefly strive against the truth which we are trying to prove.

First, the Chief Pontiff, Vicar of our Lord Jesus Christ and the successor of Peter, to whom we owe,

* "*Scytharum Civilitatem.*" Cf. Arist. *Ethics*, iii. 5, where τὸ βουλευτὸν is discussed, and thence come the first and the third example, a little altered, the Egyptian being substituted for the Spartan.

not indeed all that we owe to Christ, but all that we owe to Peter, contradicts this truth, urged it may be by zeal for the keys; and also other pastors of the Christian sheepfolds, and others whom I believe to be only led by zeal for our mother, the Church. These all, perchance from zeal and not from pride, withstand the truth which I am about to prove.

But there are certain others in whom obstinate greed has extinguished the light of reason, who are of their father the devil, and yet pretend to be sons of the Church. They not only stir up quarrels in this question, but they hate the name of the most sacred office of Prince, and would shamelessly deny the principles which we have laid down for this and the previous questions.

There is also a third class called Decretalists,* utterly without knowledge or skill in philosophy or theology, who, relying entirely on their Decretals (which doubtless, I think, should be venerated), and hoping, I believe, that these Decretals will prevail, disparage the power of the Empire. And no wonder, for I have heard one of them, speaking of these Decretals, assert shamelessly that the traditions of the Church are the foundation of the faith. May this wickedness be taken away from the thoughts

* *Parad.* ix. 133.—(W.)

of men by those who, antecedently to the traditions of the Church, have believed in Christ the Son of God, whether to come, or present, or as having already suffered; and who from their faith have hoped, and from their hope have kindled into love, and who, burning with love, will, the world doubts not, be made co-heirs with Him.

And that such arguers may be excluded once for all from the present debate, it must be noted that part of Scripture was *before* the Church, that part of it came *with* the Church, and part *after* the Church.

Before the Church were the Old and the New Testament—the covenant which the Psalmist says was "commanded for ever," of which the Church speaks to her Bridegroom, saying: "Draw me after thee."*

With the Church came those venerable chief Councils, with which no faithful Christian doubts but that Christ was present. For we have His own words to His disciples when He was about to ascend into heaven: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," to which Matthew testifies There are also the writings† of the doctors, Augustine and others, of whom, if any doubt that they were aided by the Holy Spirit, either he has never beheld their

* Ps. cxi. 9. Cant. i. 3.—(W.)

† "*Scripturæ.*"

fruit, or if he has beheld, he has never tasted thereof.

After the Church are the traditions which they call Decretals, which, although they are to be venerated for their apostolical authority, yet we must not doubt that they are to be held inferior to fundamental Scripture, seeing that Christ rebuked the Pharisees for this very thing; for when they had asked: "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?" (for they neglected the washing of hands), He answered them, as Matthew testifies: "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" Thus He intimates plainly that tradition was to have a lower place.

But if the traditions of the Church are *after* the Church, it follows that the Church had not its authority from traditions, but rather traditions from the Church; and, therefore, the men of whom we speak, seeing that they have nought but traditions, must be excluded from the debate. For those who seek after this truth must proceed in their inquiry from those things from which flows the authority of the Church.

Further, we must exclude others who boast themselves to be white sheep in the flock of the Lord, when they have the plumage of crows. These are the children of wickedness, who, that they may be able to follow their evil ways, put shame on their mother,

drive out their brethren, and when they have done all will allow none to judge them. Why should we seek to reason with these, when they are led astray by their evil desires, and so cannot see even our first principle?

Therefore there remains the controversy only with the other sort of men who are influenced by a certain kind of zeal for their mother the Church, and yet know not the truth which is sought for. With these men, therefore—strong in the reverence which a dutiful son owes to his father, which a dutiful son owes to his mother, dutiful to Christ, dutiful to the Church, dutiful to the Chief Shepherd, dutiful to all who profess the religion of Christ—I begin in this book the contest for the maintenance of the truth.

IV.—Those men to whom all our subsequent reasoning is addressed, when they assert that the authority of the Empire depends on the authority of the Church, as the inferior workman depends on the architect, are moved to take this view by many arguments, some of which they draw from Holy Scripture, and some also from the acts of the Supreme Pontiff and of the Emperor himself. Moreover, they strive to have some proof of reason.

For in the first place they say that God, according to the book of Genesis, made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to

rule the night; this they understand to be an allegory, for that the lights are the two powers,* the spiritual and the temporal. And then they maintain that as the moon, which is the lesser light, only has light so far as she receives it from the sun, so the temporal power only has authority as it receives authority from the spiritual power.

For the disposing of these, and of other like arguments, we must remember the Philosopher's words in his book on Sophistry, "the overthrow of an argument is the pointing out of the mistake."†

Error may arise in two ways, either in the matter, or in the form of an argument; either, that is, by assuming to be true what is false, or by transgressing the laws of the syllogism. The Philosopher raised objections to the arguments of Parmenides and Melissus on both of these grounds, saying that they accepted what was false, and that they did not argue correctly.‡ I use "false" in a large sense, as including the inconceivable,§ that which in matters admitting only of probability has the nature of falseness. If the error is in the form of an argument, he who wishes to destroy the error must do so by showing that the laws of the syllogism have been transgressed. If the error is in the matter, it is because something has

* "*Regimina.*"
† *Soph. El.* ii. 3.—(W.)
‡ Aristotle, *Phys.* i. 2.—(W.)
§ "*Inopinabili.*"

been assumed which is either false in itself, or false in relation to that particular instance. If the assumption is false in itself, the argument must be destroyed by destroying the assumption; if it is false only in that particular instance, we must draw a distinction between the falseness in that particular instance and its general truth.

Having noted these things, to make it more clear how we destroy this and the further fallacies of our adversaries, we must remark that there are two ways in which error may arise concerning the mystical sense, either by seeking it where it is not, or by accepting it in a sense other than its real sense.

On account of the first of these ways, Augustine says, in his work *Of the City of God*,* that we must not think that all things, of which we are told, have a special meaning; for it is on account of that which means something, that that also which means nothing is woven into a story. It is only with the ploughshare that we turn up the earth; but the other parts of the plough are also necessary.

On account of the second way in which error touching the interpretation of mysteries may arise, Augustine, in his book "*concerning Christian doctrine*," speaking of those who wish to find in Scripture some-

* Dante does not quote St. Augustine's words, but gives his meaning, xvii. 2.—(W.)

thing other than he who wrote the Scripture meant,* says, that such "are misled in the same way as a man who leaves the straight path, and then arrives at the end of the path by a long circuit." And he adds: "It ought to be shown that this is a mistake, lest through the habit of going out of the way, the man be driven to going into cross or wrong ways." And then he intimates why such precautions must be taken in interpreting Scripture. "Faith will falter, if the authority of Scripture be not sure." But I say that if these things happen from ignorance, we must pardon those who do them, when we have carefully reproved them, as we pardon those who imagine a lion in the clouds, and are afraid. But if they are done purposely, we must deal with those who err thus, as we do with tyrants, who instead of following the laws of the state for the public good, try to pervert them for their own advantage.

Oh worst of crimes, even though a man commit it in his dreams, to turn to ill use the purpose of the Eternal Spirit. Such an one does not sin against Moses, or David, or Job, or Matthew, or Paul, but against the Eternal Spirit that speaketh in them. For though the reporters of the words of God are many, yet there is one only that tells them what to write, even God,

* I. 36, 37. Dante writes: "per gyrum." The Benedictine text has: "per agrum."

who has deigned to unfold to us His will through the pens of many writers.

Having thus first noted these things, I will proceed, as I said above, to destroy the argument of those who say that the two great lights are typical of the two great powers on earth: for on this type rests the whole strength of their argument. It can be shown in two ways that this interpretation cannot be upheld. First, seeing that these two kinds of power are, in a sense, accidents of men, God would thus appear to have used a perverted order, by producing the accidents, before the essence to which they belong existed; and it is ridiculous to say this of God. For the two great lights were created on the fourth day, while man was not created till the sixth day, as is evident in the text of Scripture.

Secondly, seeing that these two kinds of rule are to guide men to certain ends, as we shall see, it follows that if man had remained in the state of innocence in which God created him, he would not have needed such means of guidance. These kinds of rule, then, are remedies against the weakness of sin. Since, then, man was not a sinner on the fourth day, for he did not then even exist, it would have been idle to make remedies for his sin, and this would be contrary to the goodness of God. For he would be a sorry physician who would make a plaster for

an abscess which was to be, before the man was born. It cannot, therefore, be said that God made these two kinds of rule on the fourth day, and therefore the meaning of Moses cannot have been what these men pretend.

We may also be more tolerant, and overthrow this falsehood by drawing a distinction. This way of distinction is a gentler way of treating an adversary, for so his arguments are not made to appear consciously false, as is the case when we utterly overthrow him. I say then that, although the moon has not light of its own abundantly, unless it receives it from the sun, yet it does not therefore follow that the moon is from the sun. Therefore be it known that the being, and the power, and the working of the moon are all different things. For its being, the moon in no way depends on the sun, nor for its power, nor for its working, considered in itself. Its motion comes from its proper mover, its influence is from its own rays. For it has a certain light of its own, which is manifest at the time of an eclipse; though for its better and more powerful working it receives from the sun an abundant light, which enables it to work more powerfully.

Therefore I say that the temporal power does not receive its being from the spiritual power, nor its power which is its authority, nor its working

considered in itself. Yet it is good that the temporal power should receive from the spiritual the means of working more effectively by the light of the grace which the benediction of the Supreme Pontiff bestows on it both in heaven and on earth. Therefore we may see that the argument of these men erred in its form, because the predicate of the conclusion is not the predicate of the major premiss. The argument runs thus: The moon receives her light from the sun, which is the spiritual power. The temporal power is the moon. Therefore the temporal power receives authority from the spiritual power. "Light" is the predicate of the major premiss, "authority" the predicate of the conclusion; which two things we have seen to be very different in their subject and in their idea.

V.—They draw another argument from the text of Moses, saying that the types of these two powers sprang from the loins of Jacob, for that they are prefigured in Levi and Judah, whereof one was founder of the spiritual power, and the other of the temporal. From this they argue: the Church has the same relation to the Empire that Levi had to Judah. Levi preceded Judah in his birth, therefore the Church precedes the Empire in authority.

This error is easily overthrown. For when they say that Levi and Judah, the sons of Jacob, are the

types of spiritual and temporal power, I could show this argument, too, to be wholly false; but I will grant it to be true. Then they infer, as Levi came first in birth, so does the Church come first in authority. But, as in the previous argument, the predicates of the conclusion and of the major premiss are different: authority and birth are different things, both in their subject and in their idea; and therefore there is an error in the form of the argument. The argument is as follows: A precedes B in C; D and E stand in the same relation as A and B; therefore D precedes E in F. But then F and C are different things. And if it is objected that F follows from C, that is, authority from priority of birth, and that the effect is properly substituted for the cause, as if "animal" were used in an argument for men, the objection is bad. For there are many men, who were born before others, who not only do not precede those others in authority, but even come after them: as is plain where we find a bishop younger than his archpresbyters. Therefore their objection appears to err in that it assumes as a cause that which is none.

VI.—Again, from the first book of Kings they take the election and the deposition of Saul; and they say that Saul, an enthroned king, was deposed by Samuel, who, by God's command, acted in the

stead of God, as appears from the text of Scripture. From this they argue that, as that Vicar of God had authority to give temporal power, and to take it away and bestow it on another, so now the Vicar of God, the bishop of the universal Church, has authority to give the sceptre of temporal power, and to take it away, and even to give it to another. And if this were so, it would follow without doubt that the authority of the Empire is dependent on the Church, as they say.

But we may answer and destroy this argument, by which they say that Samuel was the Vicar of God: for it was not as Vicar of God that he acted, but as a special delegate for this purpose, or as a messenger bearing the express command of his Lord. For it is clear that what God commanded him, that only he did, and that only he said.

Therefore we must recognise that it is one thing to be another's vicar, and that it is another to be his messenger or minister, just as it is one thing to be a doctor, and another to be an interpreter. For a vicar is one to whom is committed jurisdiction with law or with arbitrary power, and therefore within the bounds of the jurisdiction which is committed to him, he may act by law or by his arbitrary power without the knowledge of his lord. It is not so with a mere messenger, in so far as he is a messenger; but

as the mallet acts only by the strength of the smith, so the messenger acts only by the authority of him that sent him. Although, then, God did this by His messenger Samuel, it does not follow that the Vicar of God may do the same. For there are many things which God has done and still does, and yet will do through angels, which the Vicar of God, the successor of Peter, might not do.

Therefore we may see that they argue from the whole to a part, thus: Men can hear and see, therefore the eye can hear and see: which does not hold. Were the argument negative, it would be good: for instance, man cannot fly, therefore man's arm cannot fly. And, in the same way, God cannot, by his messenger, cause what is not to have been,* as Agathon says; therefore neither can his Vicar.

VII.—Further, they use the offering of the wise men from the text of Matthew, saying that Christ accepted from them both frankincense and gold, to signify that He was lord and ruler both of things temporal and of things spiritual; and from this they infer that the Vicar of Christ is also lord and ruler both of things temporal and of things spiritual; and that consequently he has authority over both.

To this I answer, that I acknowledge that Matthew's

* As quoted by Aristotle, *Ethics*, vi. 3.—(W.)

words and meaning are both as they say, but that the inference which they attempt to draw therefrom fails, because it fails in the terms of the argument. Their syllogism runs thus: God is the lord both of things temporal and of things spiritual, the holy Pontiff is the Vicar of God; therefore he is lord both of things temporal and of things spiritual. Both of these propositions are true, but the middle term in them is different, and *four* terms are introduced, by which the form of the syllogism is not kept, as is plain from what is said of "the syllogism simply."* For "God" is the subject of the major premiss, and "the Vicar of God" is the predicate of the minor; and these are not the same.

And if anyone raises the objection that the Vicar of God is equal in power to God, his objection is idle; for no vicar, whether human or divine, can be equal in power to the master whose vicar he is, which is at once obvious. We know that the successor of Peter had not equal authority with God, at least in the works of nature; he could not make a clod of earth fall upwards, nor fire to burn in a downward direction, by virtue of the office committed to him. Nor could all things be committed to him by God; for God could not commit to any the power of

* Arist. *Anal. Prior.*, or rather, the *Summulæ Logicæ*, l. iv., of Petrus Hispanus.—(W.)

creation, and of baptism, as is clearly proved, notwithstanding what* the Master says in his fourth book.

We know also that the vicar of a mortal man is not equal in authority to the man whose vicar he is, so far as he is his vicar; for none can give away what is not his. The authority of a prince does not belong to a prince, except for him to use it; for no prince can give to himself authority. He can indeed receive authority, and give it up, but he cannot create it in another man, for it does not belong to a prince to create another prince. And if this is so, it is manifest that no prince can substitute for himself a vicar equal to himself in authority respecting all things, and therefore the objection to our argument has no weight.

VIII.—They also bring forward that saying in Matthew of Christ to Peter: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven;" which also, from the text of Matthew and John, they allow to have been in like manner said to all the Apostles. From this they argue that it has been granted by God to the successor of Peter to be able to bind and to loose all things; hence

* Peter Lombard, "magister sententiarum," iv. dist. 5, f. 2.—(W.)

they infer that he can loose the laws and decrees of the Empire, and also bind laws and decrees for the temporal power; and, if this were so, this conclusion would rightly follow.

But we must draw a distinction touching their major premiss. Their syllogism is in this form. Peter could loose and bind all things; the successor of Peter can do whatever Peter could do; therefore the successor of Peter can bind and can loose all things: whence they conclude that he can bind and can loose the decrees and the authority of the Empire.

Now I admit the minor premiss; but touching the major premiss I draw a distinction. The universal "everything" which is included in "whatever" is not distributed beyond the extent of the distributed term. If I say "all animals run," "all" is distributed so as to include everything which comes under the class "animal." But if I say "all men run," then "all" is only distributed so as to include every individual in the class "man;" and when I say "every grammarian runs," then is the distribution even more limited.

Therefore we must always look to see what it is that is to be included in the word "all," and when we know the nature and extent of the distributed term, it will easily be seen how far the distribution extends. Therefore, when it is said "whatsoever thou shalt bind," if "whatsoever" bore an unlimited

sense, they would speak truly, and the power of the Pope would extend even beyond what they say; for he might then divorce a wife from her husband, and marry her to another while her first husband was yet alive, which he can in no wise do. He might even absolve me when impenitent, which God Himself cannot do.

Therefore it is manifest that the distribution of the term in question is not absolute, but in reference to something. What this is will be sufficiently clear if we consider what power was granted to Peter. Christ said to Peter: "To thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven"—that is, "I will make thee the doorkeeper of the kingdom of heaven." And then He adds: "Whatsoever," which is to say "all that"—to wit, all that has reference to this duty—"thou shalt have power to bind and to loose." And thus the universal which is implied in "whatsoever" has only a limited distribution, referring to the office of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And in this sense the proposition of our opponents is true, but, taken absolutely, it is manifestly false. I say, then, that although the successor of Peter has power to bind and to loose, as belongs to him to whom the office of Peter was committed, yet it does not therefore follow that he has power to bind and to loose the decrees of the Empire, as our opponents say, unless they further

prove that to do so belongs to the office of the keys, which we shall shortly show is not the case.

IX.—They further take the words in Luke which Peter spake to Christ, saying: "Behold, here are two swords;" and they understood that by these two swords the two kinds of rule were foretold. And since Peter said "here," where he was, which is to say, "with him," they argue that the authority of the two kinds of rule rests with the successor of Peter.

We must answer by showing that the interpretation, on which the argument rests, is wrong. They say that the two swords of which Peter spake mean the two kinds of rule which we have spoken of; but this we wholly deny, for then Peter's answer would not be according to the meaning of the words of Christ; and also we say that Peter made, as was his wont, a hasty answer, touching only the outside of things.

It will be manifest that such an answer as our opponents allege would not be according to the meaning of the words of Christ, if the preceding words, and the reason of them, be considered. Observe, then, that these words were spoken on the day of the feast, for a little before Luke writes thus: "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed;" and at this feast Christ had spoken of His Passion, which was at hand, in which it was

necessary for Him to be separated from His disciples. Observe, too, that when these words were spoken the twelve were assembled together, and therefore, shortly after the words which we have just quoted, Luke says: "And when the hour was come He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him." And continuing His discourse with them, He came to this: "When I sent you, without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. Then said He unto them: But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." From these words the purpose of Christ is sufficiently manifest; for He did not say: "Buy, or get for yourselves, two swords," but rather "twelve swords," seeing that He spake unto twelve disciples: "He that hath not, let him buy," so that each should have one. And He said this to admonish them of the persecution and scorn that they should suffer, as though He would say: "As long as I was with you men received you gladly, but now you will be driven away; therefore of necessity ye must prepare for yourselves those things which formerly I forbade you to have." And therefore if the answer of Peter bore the meaning which our opponents assign to it, it would have been no answer to the words of Christ; and Christ would have rebuked him for

answering foolishly, as He often did rebuke him. But Christ did not rebuke him, but was satisfied, saying unto him: "It is enough," as though He would say: "I speak because of the necessity; but if each one of you cannot possess a sword, two are enough."

And that it was Peter's wont to speak in a shallow manner is proved by his hasty and thoughtless forwardness, to which he was led not only by the sincerity of his faith, but also, I believe, by the natural purity and simplicity of his character. All the Evangelists bear testimony to this forwardness.

Matthew writes that when Jesus had asked His disciples: "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered before them all and said: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." He writes also that when Christ was saying to His disciples that he must go up to Jerusalem and suffer many things, Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying: "Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee." But Christ turned and rebuked him, and said: "Get thee behind me, Satan." Matthew also writes that in the Mount of Transfiguration, on the sight of Christ, and of Moses and Elias, and of the two sons of Zebedee, Peter said: "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." He also writes that when the disciples were in a ship, in the

night, and Christ went unto them walking on the sea, then Peter said unto Him: "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water." And when Christ foretold that all His disciples should be offended because of Him, Peter answered and said: "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended;" and then: "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee." And to this saying Mark bears witness also. And Luke writes that Peter had said to Christ, a little before the words touching the swords which we have quoted: "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison and to death." And John says of him, that, when Christ wished to wash his feet, Peter answered and said: "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" and then: "Thou shalt never wash my feet." The same Evangelist tells us that it was Peter who smote the High Priest's servant with a sword, and the other Evangelists also bear witness to this thing. He tells us also how Peter entered the sepulchre at once, when he saw the other disciple waiting outside, and how, when Christ was on the shore after the resurrection, when Peter had heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him (for he was naked) and did cast himself into the sea. Lastly, John tells that when Peter saw John, he said unto Jesus: "Lord, and what shall this man do?"

It is a pleasure to have pursued this point about our Chief Shepherd,* in praise of his purity of spirit; but from what I have said it is plain that when he spake of the two swords, he answered the words of Christ with no second meaning.

But if we are to receive these words of Christ and of Peter typically, they must not be explained as our adversaries explain them; but they must be referred to that sword of which Matthew writes: "Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth; I come not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father," &c. And this comes to pass not only in words, but also in fact. And therefore Luke speaks to Theophilus of all "that Jesus began both to do and to teach." It was a sword of that kind that Christ commanded them to buy; and Peter said that it was already doubly there. For they were ready both for words and for deeds, by which they should accomplish what Christ said that He had come to do by the sword.

X.—Certain persons say further that the Emperor Constantine, having been cleansed from leprosy by the intercession of Sylvester, then the Supreme Pontiff, gave unto the Church the seat of Empire which was

* "Archimandrita nostro." Cf. *Parad.* xi. 09, of St. Francis.—(W.)

Rome, together with many other dignities belonging to the Empire.* Hence they argue that no man can take unto himself these dignities unless he receive them from the Church, whose they are said to be. From this it would rightly follow, that one authority depends on the other, as they maintain.

The arguments which seemed to have their roots in the Divine words, have been stated and disproved. It remains to state and disprove those which are grounded on Roman history and in the reason of mankind. The first of these is the one which we have mentioned, in which the syllogism runs as follows: No one has a right to those things which belong to the Church, unless he has them from the Church; and this we grant. The government of Rome belongs to the Church; therefore no one has a right to it unless it be given him by the Church. The minor premiss is proved by the facts concerning Constantine, which we have touched on.

This minor premiss then will I destroy; and as for their proof, I say that it proves nothing. For the dignity of the Empire was what Constantine could not alienate, nor the Church receive. And when they insist, I prove my words as follows: No man on the strength of the office which is committed to him, may

* On the Donation of Constantine, Witte refers to *Inf.* xxxviii. 94; xix. 115; *Purg.* xxxii. 124; *Parad.* xx. 35; *suprà* ii. 12.

do aught that is contrary to that office; for so one and the same man, viewed as one man, would be contrary to himself, which is impossible. But to divide the Empire is contrary to the office committed to the Emperor; for his office is to hold mankind in all things subject to one will: as may be easily seen from the first book of this treatise. Therefore it is not permitted to the Emperor to divide the Empire. If, therefore, as they say, any dignities had been alienated by Constantine, and had passed to the Church, the "coat without seam"—which even they, who pierced Christ, the true God, with a spear, dared not rend—would have been rent.*

Further, just as the Church has its foundation, so has the Empire its foundation. The foundation of the Church is Christ, as Paul says in his first Epistle to the Corinthians: "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."† He is the rock on which the Church is built; but the foundation of the Empire is human right. Now I say that, as the Church may not go contrary to its foundation—but must always rest on its foundation, as the words of the Canticles say: "Who

* Each side in the controversy used the type of the "seamless robe," one of the Empire (*suprà* i. 16), the other of the Church; *e.g.*, in the Bull of Boniface VIII., "*Unam Sanctam.*"

† 1 Cor. iii. 11.—(W.)

is she that cometh up from the desert, abounding in delights, leaning on her beloved?"*—in the same way I say that the Empire may not do aught that transgresses human right. But were the Empire to destroy itself, it would so transgress human right. Therefore the Empire may not destroy itself. Since then to divide the Empire would be to destroy it, because the Empire consists in one single universal Monarchy, it is manifest that he who exercises the authority of the Empire may not destroy it, and from what we have said before, it is manifest that to destroy the Empire is contrary to human right.

Moreover, all jurisdiction is prior in time to the judge who has it; for it is the judge who is ordained for the jurisdiction, not the jurisdiction for the judge. But the Empire is a jurisdiction, comprehending within itself all temporal jurisdiction: therefore it is prior to the judge who has it, who is the Emperor. For it is the Emperor who is ordained for the Empire, and not contrariwise. Therefore it is clear that the Emperor, in so far as he is Emperor, cannot alter the Empire; for it is to the Empire that he owes his being. I say then that he who is said to have conferred on the Church the authority in question either was Emperor, or he was not. If he was not,

* Cant. viii. 5.—(W.)

it is plain that he had no power to give away any part of the Empire. Nor could he, if he was Emperor, in so far as he was Emperor, for such a gift would be a diminishing of his jurisdiction.

Further, if one Emperor were able to cut off a certain portion of the jurisdiction of the Empire, so could another; and since temporal jurisdiction is finite, and since all that is finite is taken away by finite diminutions, it would follow that it is possible for the first of all jurisdictions to be annihilated, which is absurd.

Further, since he that gives is in the position of an agent, and he to whom a thing is given in that of a patient, as the Philosopher holds in the fourth book to Nicomachus,* therefore, that a gift may be given, we require not only the fit qualification of the giver, but also of the receiver; for the acts of the agent are completed in a patient who is qualified.† But the Church was altogether unqualified to receive temporal things; for there is an express command, forbidding her so to do, which Matthew gives thus: "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses." For though we find in Luke a relaxation of the command in regard to certain matters, yet I have not anywhere been able to find that the Church after

* *Eth.* iv. 1.—(W.) † "*Dispositio; dispositus; indisposita.*"

that prohibition had licence given her to possess gold and silver. If therefore the Church was unable to receive temporal power, even granting that Constantine was able to give it, yet the gift was impossible; for the receiver was disqualified. It is therefore plain that neither could the Church receive in the way of possession, nor could Constantine give in the way of alienation; though it is true that the Emperor, as protector of the Church, could allot to the Church a patrimony and other things, if he did not impair his supreme lordship, the unity of which does not allow division. And the Vicar of God could receive such things, not to possess them, but as a steward to dispense the fruits of them to the poor of Christ, on behalf of the Church, as we know the Apostles did.

XI.—Our adversaries further say that the Pope Hadrian* summoned Charles the Great to his own assistance† and to that of the Church, on account of the wrongs suffered from the Lombards in the time of their king Desiderius, and that Charles received from that Pope the imperial dignity, notwithstanding that Michael was emperor at Constantinople. And therefore they say that all the Roman emperors who succeeded Charles were themselves the "advocates" of the Church, and ought by the Church to be

* A.D. 773.—(W.) † "*Advocavit.*"

called to their office. From which would follow that dependence of the Empire on the Church which they wish to prove.

But to overset their argument, I reply that what they say is nought; for a usurpation of right does not make right; and if it were so, it might be proved in the same way that the Church is dependent on the Empire; for the Emperor Otto restored the Pope Leo, and deposed Benedict, leading him into exile to Saxony.*

XII.—But from *reason* they thus argue: they take the principle laid down in the tenth book of "*Philosophia Prima*," † saying that all things which belong to one genus are to be brought under one head, which is the standard and measure of all that come under that genus. But all men belong to one genus: therefore they are to be brought under one head, as the standard and measure of them all. But the Supreme Pontiff and the Emperor are men; therefore if the preceding reasoning be true, they must be brought under one head. And since the Pope cannot come under any other man, the result is that the Emperor, together with all other men, must be brought under the Pope, as the measure and rule of all; and then, what those who argue thus desire follows.

* Otto I. (964) deposed Benedict V. and restored Leo VIII.

† Arist. *Metaph.* x. 1.—(W.)

To overset this argument, I answer that they are right when they say that all the individuals of one genus ought to be brought under one head, as their measure; and that they are again right when they say that all men belong to one genus, and that they are also right when they argue from these truths that all men should be brought under one head, taken from the genus man, as their measure and type. But when they obtain the further conclusion concerning the Pope and the Emperor, they fall into a fallacy touching accidental attributes.

That this thing may be understood, it must be clearly known that to be a man is one thing, and to be a pope or an emperor is another; just as to be a man is different from being a father or a ruler. A man is that which exists by its essential form, which gives it its genus and species, and by which it comes under the category of substance. But a father is that which exists by an accidental form, that is, one which stands in a certain relation which gives it a certain genus and species, and through which it comes under the category of relation. If this were not so, all things would come under the category of substance, seeing that no accidental form can exist by itself, without the support of an existing substance; and this is not so. Seeing, therefore, that the Pope and the Emperor are what they are

by virtue of certain relations: for they owe their existence to the Papacy and the Empire, which are both relations, one coming within the sphere of fatherhood, and the other within that of rule; it manifestly follows that both the Pope and the Emperor, in so far as they are Pope and Emperor, must come under the category of relation; and therefore that they must be brought under some head of that genus.

I say then that there is one standard under which they are to be brought, as men; and another under which they come, as Pope and Emperor. For in so far as they are men, they have to be brought under the best man, whoever he be, who is the measure and the ideal of all mankind; under him, that is, who is most one in his kind,* as may be gathered from the last book to Nicomachus.† When, however, two things are relative, it is evident that they must either be reciprocally brought under each other, if they are alternately superior, or if by the nature of their relation they belong to connected species; or else they must be brought under some third thing, as their common unity. But the first of these suppositions is impossible: for then both would be predicable of both, which cannot be. We cannot say that the Emperor is the Pope, or the Pope the

* "*Ad existentem maxime unum in genere suo.*"

† *Eth.* x. 5, 7.—(W.)

Emperor. Nor again can it be said that they are connected in species, for the idea of the Pope is quite other than the idea of the Emperor, in so far as they are Pope and Emperor. Therefore they must be reduced to some single thing above them.

Now it must be understood that the relative is to the relative as the relation to the relation. If, therefore, the Papacy and the Empire, seeing that they are relations of paramount superiority, have to be carried back to some higher point of superiority from which they, with the features which make them different,* branch off, the Pope and Emperor, being relative to one another, must be brought back to some one unity in which the higher point of superiority, without this characteristic difference, is found. And this will be either God, to whom all things unite in looking up, or something below God, which is higher in the scale of superiority, while differing from the simple and absolute superiority of God. Thus it is evident that the Pope and the Emperor, in so far as they are men, have to be brought under some one head; while, in so far as they are Pope and Emperor, they have to be brought under another head, and so far is clear, as regards the argument from reason.

XIII.—We have now stated and put on one side

* "*Cum differentialibus suis.*"

those erroneous reasonings on which they, who assert that the authority of the Roman Emperor depends on the Pope of Rome, do most chiefly rely. We have now to go back and show forth the truth in this third question, which we proposed in the beginning to examine. The truth will appear plainly enough if I start in my inquiry from the principle which I laid down, and then show that the authority of the Empire springs immediately from the head of all being, who is God. This truth will be made manifest, either if it be shown that the authority of the Empire does not spring from the authority of the Church; for there is no argument concerning any other authority. Or again, if it be shown by direct proof that the authority of the Empire springs immediately from God.

We prove that the authority of the Church is not the cause of the authority of the Empire in the following manner. Nothing can be the cause of power in another thing when that other thing has all its power, while the first either does not exist, or else has no power of action.* But the Empire had its power while the Church was either not existing at all, or else had no power of acting. Therefore the Church is not the cause of the power of the Empire, and therefore not of its authority either, for power

* "*Non virtuante.*"

and authority mean the same thing. Let A be the Church, B the Empire, C the authority or power of the Empire. If C is in B while A does not exist, A cannot be the cause of C being in B, for it is impossible for an effect to exist before its cause. Further, if C is in B while A does not act, it cannot be that A is the cause of C being in B; for, to produce an effect, it is necessary that the cause, especially the efficient cause of which we are speaking, should have been at work first. The major premiss of this argument is self-evident, and the minor premiss is confirmed by Christ and the Church. Christ confirms it by His birth and His death, as we have said; the Church confirms it in the words which Paul spake to Festus in the Acts of the Apostles: "I stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged," and by the words which an angel of God spake to Paul a little afterwards: "Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar;" and again by Paul's words to the Jews of Italy: "But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had aught to accuse my nation of," but "to deliver my soul from death." But if Cæsar had not at that time had the authority to judge in temporal matters, Christ would not have argued thus; nor would the angel have brought these words; nor would he, who spake of himself as "having a desire to depart

and to be with Christ," have made an appeal to a judge not having authority.*

And if Constantine had not had the authority over the patronage of the Church, those things which he allotted from the Empire he could not have had the right to allot; and so the Church would be using this gift against right; whereas God wills that offerings should be pure, as is commanded in Leviticus: "No meat offering that ye shall bring unto the Lord shall be made with leaven." And though this command appears to regard those who offer, nevertheless it also regards those who receive an offering. For it is folly to suppose that God wishes to be received that which He forbids to be offered, for in the same book there is a command to the Levites: "Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth; neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye shall be defiled thereby." † But to say that the Church so misuses the patrimony assigned to her is very unseemly; therefore the premiss from which this conclusion followed is false.

XIV.—Again, if the Church had power to bestow authority on the Roman Prince, she would have it

* "*Incompetentem.*" Acts xxv. 10; xxvii. 24; xxviii. 19. Phil. i. 23.—(W.)

† Levit. ii. 11; xi. 43.—(W.)

either from God, or from herself, or from some Emperor, or from the universal consent of mankind, or at least of the majority of mankind. There is no other crevice by which this power could flow down to the Church. But she has it not from any of these sources; therefore she has it not at all.

It is manifest that she has it from none of these sources; for if she had received it from God, she would have received it either by the divine or by the natural law: because what is received from nature is received from God; though the converse of this is not true. But this power is not received by the natural law; for nature lays down no law, save for the effects of nature, for God cannot fail in power, where he brings anything into being without the aid of secondary agents. Since therefore the Church is not an effect of nature, but of God who said: "Upon this rock I will build my Church," and elsewhere: "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do," it is manifest that nature did not give the Church this law.

Nor was this power bestowed by the divine law; for the whole of the divine law is contained in the bosom of the Old or of the New Testament, and I cannot find therein that any thought or care for worldly matters was commanded, either to the early or to the latter priesthood. Nay, I find rather

such care taken away from the priests of the Old Testament by the express command of God to Moses,* and from the priests of the New Testament by the express command of Christ to His disciples.† But it could not be that this care was taken away from them, if the authority of the temporal power flowed from the priesthood; for at least in giving the authority there would be an anxious watchfulness of forethought, and afterwards continued precaution, lest he to whom authority had been given should leave the straight way.

Then it is quite plain that the Church did not receive this power from herself; for nothing can give what it has not. Therefore all that does anything, must be such in its doing, as that which it intends to do, as is stated in the book "of Simple Being."‡ But it is plain that if the Church gave to herself this power, she had it not before she gave it. Thus she would have given what she had not, which is impossible.

But it is sufficiently manifest from what we have previously made evident that the Church has received not this power from any Emperor.

And further, that she had it not from the consent of all, or even of the greater part of mankind, who

* Numbers xviii. 20. Cf. *Purg.* xvi. 131.—(W.)

† Matt. x. 9.—(W.)

‡ Arist. *Metaph.* ix. 8.—(W.)

can doubt? seeing that not only all the inhabitants of Asia and Africa, but even the greater number of Europeans, hold the thought in abhorrence. It is mere weariness to adduce proofs in matters which are so plain.

XV.—Again, that which is contrary to the nature of a thing cannot be counted as one of its essential powers; for the essential powers of each individual follow on its nature, in order to gain its end. But the power to grant authority in that which is the realm of our mortal state is contrary to the nature of the Church.* Therefore it is not in the number of its essential powers. For the proof of the minor premiss we must know that the nature of the Church means the form [or essence]† of the Church. For although men use the word nature not only of the form of a thing, but also of its matter, nevertheless, it is of the form that they use it more properly, as is proved in the book "of Natural Learning."‡ But the [essence or] form of the Church is nothing else than the life of Christ, as it is contained both in His sayings and in His deeds. For His life was the example and ideal of the militant Church, especially of its pastors, and above all of its chief pastor, to whom it belongs to

* "*Virtus auctorizandi regnum nostræ mortalitatis est contra naturam Ecclesiæ.*"

† "*Forma.*" ‡ Arist. *Phys. Ausc.* ii. 1.—(W.)

feed the sheep and the lambs of Christ. And therefore when Christ left His life unto men for an example He said in John's Gospel: "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." And He said unto Peter specially, after that He had committed unto him the office of shepherd, the words which John also reports: "Peter, follow me." But Christ denied before Pilate that His rule was of this sort, saying: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence."*

But this saying must not be understood to mean that Christ, who is God, is not the lord of this kingdom, for the Psalmist says: "The sea is His, and He made it, and His hands formed the dry land."† We must understand it to mean that, as *the pattern of the Church*, He had not the care of this kingdom. It is as if a golden seal were to speak of itself, and say: "I am not the standard for such and such a class of things;" for in so far as it is gold, this saying is untrue, seeing that gold is the standard of all metals; but it is true in so far as it is a sign capable of being received by impression.

It belongs, then, to the very form of the Church

* John xiii. 15; xxi. 22; xviii. 36.—(W.) † Ps. xcv. 5.—(W.)

always to speak the same, always to think the same; and to do the opposite of this is evidently contrary to its essential form—that is to say, to its nature. And from this it may be collected that the power of bestowing authority on this kingdom is contrary to the nature of the Church; for contrariety which is in thought or word follows from contrariety which is in the thing thought and the thing said; just as truth and falsehood in speech come from the being or the not-being of the thing, as we learn from the doctrine of the *Categories*. It has then become manifest enough by means of the preceding arguments, by which the contention of our opponents has been shown to lead to an absurd result, that the authority of the Empire is not in any way dependent on the authority of the Church.

XVI.—Although it has been proved in the preceding chapter that the authority of the Empire has not its cause in the authority of the Supreme Pontiff; for we have shown that this argument led to absurd results; yet it has not been entirely shown that the authority of the Empire depends directly upon God, except as a result from our argument. For it is a consequence that, if the authority comes not from the vicar of God, it must come from God Himself. And therefore, for the complete determination of the question proposed, we have to prove

directly that the emperor or monarch of the world stands in an immediate relation to the King of the universe, who is God.

For the better comprehending of this, it must be recognised that man alone, of all created things, holds a position midway between things corruptible and things incorruptible; and therefore* philosophers rightly liken him to a dividing line between two hemispheres. For man consists of two essential parts, namely, the soul and the body. If he be considered in relation to his body only, he is corruptible; but if he be considered in relation to his soul only, he is incorruptible. And therefore the Philosopher spoke well concerning the incorruptible soul when he said in the second book "of the Soul:" "It is this alone which may be separated, as being eternal, from the corruptible."†

If, therefore, man holds this position midway between the corruptible and the incorruptible, since every middle nature partakes of both extremes, man must share something of each nature. And since every nature is ordained to gain some final end, it follows that for man there is a double end. For as

* In the *De Causis* (*v.* above, i. 11), Propos. 9: "Intelligentia comprehendit generata et naturam, et horizontem naturæ, scilicet animam; nam ipsa est supra naturam."—(W.)

† Arist. *De Anim.* ii. 2.—(W.)

he alone of all beings participates both in the corruptible and the incorruptible, so he alone of all beings is ordained to gain two ends, whereby one is his end in so far as he is corruptible, and the other in so far as he is incorruptible.

Two ends, therefore, have been laid down by the ineffable providence of God for man to aim at: the blessedness of this life, which consists in the exercise of his natural powers, and which is prefigured in* the earthly Paradise; and next, the blessedness of the life eternal, which consists in the fruition of the sight of God's countenance, and to which man by his own natural powers cannot rise, if he be not aided by the divine light; and this blessedness is understood by the heavenly Paradise.

But to these different kinds of blessedness, as to different conclusions, we must come by different means. For at the first we may arrive by the lessons of philosophy, if only we will follow them, by acting in accordance with the moral and intellectual virtues. But at the second we can only arrive by spiritual lessons, transcending human reason, so that we follow them in accordance with the theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity. The truth of the first of these conclusions and of these means is made manifest by

* See *Purg.* xxviii. : and Mr. Longfellow's note ad loc.

human reason, which by the philosophers has been all laid open to us. The other conclusions and means are made manifest by the Holy Spirit, who by the mouth of the Prophets and holy writers, and by Jesus Christ, the co-eternal Son of God, and His disciples, has revealed to us supernatural truth of which we have great need. Nevertheless human passion would cast them all behind its back, if it were not that men, going astray like the beasts that perish,* were restrained in their course by bit and bridle, like horses and mules.

Therefore man had need of two guides for his life, as he had a twofold end in life; whereof one is the Supreme Pontiff, to lead mankind to eternal life, according to the things revealed to us; and the other is the Emperor, to guide mankind to happiness in this world, in accordance with the teaching of philosophy. And since none, or but a few only, and even they with sore difficulty, could arrive at this harbour of happiness, unless the waves and blandishments of human desires were set at rest, and the human race were free to live in peace and quiet, this therefore is the mark at which he who is to care for the world, and whom we call the Roman Prince, must most chiefly aim at: I mean, that in this little plot of

* "*Sua bestialitate vagantes.*" *V.* Ps. xxxii. 10.

earth* belonging to mortal men, life may pass in freedom and with peace. And since the order of this world follows the order of the heavens, as they run their course, it is necessary, to the end that the learning which brings liberty and peace may be duly applied by this guardian of the world in fitting season and place, that this power should be dispensed by Him who is ever present to behold the whole order of the heavens. And this is He who alone has preordained this, that by it in His providence He might bind all things together, each in their own order.

But if this is so, God alone elects, God alone confirms: for there is none higher than God. And hence there is the further conclusion, that neither those who now are, nor any others who may, in whatsoever way, have been called "Electors," ought to have that name; rather they are to be held as declarers and announcers of the providence of God. And, therefore, it is that they to whom is granted the privilege of announcing God's will sometimes fall into disagreement; because that, all of them or some of them have been blinded by their evil desires, and have not discerned the face of God's appointment.†

It is therefore clear that the authority of temporal

* Cf. *Parad.* xxii. 151. "*L'ajuola che si fa tanto feroci.*"

† *V.* Hallam, *Middle Ages*, c. v. Bryce, *Roman Empire*, c. xiv. Witte, *Præf.* p. xxxiv. xlv.

Monarchy comes down, with no intermediate will, from the fountain of universal authority; and this fountain, one in its unity, flows through many channels out of the abundance of the goodness of God.

And now, methinks, I have reached the goal which I set before me. I have unravelled the truth of the questions which I asked: whether the office of Monarchy was necessary to the welfare of the world; whether it was by right that the Roman people assumed to themselves the office of Monarchy; and, further, that last question, whether the authority of the Monarch springs immediately from God, or from some other. Yet the truth of this latter question must not be received so narrowly as to deny that in certain matters the Roman Prince is subject to the Roman Pontiff. For that happiness, which is subject to mortality, in a sense is ordered with a view to the happiness which shall not taste of death. Let, therefore, Cæsar be reverent to Peter, as the first-born son should be reverent to his father, that he may be illuminated with the light of his father's grace, and so may be stronger to lighten the world over which he has been placed by Him alone, who is the ruler of all things spiritual as well as temporal.

THE END.

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